

# AN APPROACH TO REALITY

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BY  
N. SRI RAM



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TIRUPATI.

THIS volume consists of a number of addresses delivered in different places, and some articles dealing with matters touched upon in the addresses. They are being printed in this form in the belief that they may be of interest to readers.

The subject of Reality is a difficult one, and whatever is in the following pages represents the writer's approach and is merely an attempt on his part to define his understanding. The standpoint with regard to all matters in the book is that of a student of Theosophy, and what Theosophy is, as seen from the writer's point of view, is explained in one of the articles.

To a true Theosophist, who seeks the Wisdom without that dogmatism which ever negates the seeking, there is no finality in his understanding. Seeking implies discovery and each must have his own approach to whatever he may discover. But there is a value in

exchange of views, and even if the comments of readers do not all reach the writer, the calling forth of those comments is in itself part of the process of exchange.

The writing of this foreword serves one excellent purpose. That is to thank my friends and co-workers, Miss Elithe Nisewanger, Mr. M. Subramaniam and Miss Katherine A. Beechey for their valuable help in editing and correcting the proofs of this book, as well as the other small volumes which happen to bear my name.

N. SRI RAM

Adyar,

*1 December, 1951*



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# I

## APPEARANCE AND REALITY

THIS is a subject that has been discussed almost thread-bare both in ancient India and by western philosophers. But our thoughts about it in these days have a basis which is different from that of the earlier times. The distinctive cast of the modern mind, in spite of its vagaries, is scientific rather than metaphysical, tending to base itself on observations with the senses and the analysis to which we are now in a position to subject them. We are not living in a traditional world built on certain metaphysical assumptions, however true these assumptions might be as postulates for a coherent and satisfactory system, or even as axioms self-evident to those whose thought can prove their validity. We live in an age of empiricism, though the field of empirical knowledge has become so widened and minutely defined that the most

advanced intellects of the day are able to build on it a structure of inferences or knowledge, which holds together coherently like a deductive system based on certain first principles.

Nothing can be more deductive and more integrated in the scientific field than mathematics ; yet, according to Sir James Jeans, the well-known British astronomer and exponent of modern scientific thought, the latest revelations of Science lead to the conclusion that " the universe (of the scientist) can best be pictured, although still very imperfectly and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker." Since all knowledge thus tends to be integrated, we shall not hereafter be able to isolate one standpoint, such as the religious or the philosophical, from the scientific, content to let each develop its theses without being influenced by others, though each distinctive standpoint will have its interest for its own votaries.

It may be asked : Need we discuss at all this question of appearance and reality in the modern work-a-day world ? This is answered the moment we realize how completely

appearance holds sway in our ordinary life. For instance, as regards the earth's motion round its own axis and round the sun, it is only comparatively recently, at least in the West, that the discovery has been made and accepted that the facts are exactly the contrary of appearance.

We do not see the stars in the sky as it appears to us by day. Yet the stars are there, and if we had a sight that can be projected like light rays into space, we would see them as resplendent suns in a gradation of magnitudes, orb upon orb, wheel within gigantic wheel.

Another instance, still concerned with matter but in which the perceptions of our normal consciousness are more intricately involved, is that of the seeming solidity of so many objects around us, such as our tables, houses, trees and metals. The researches of science, both into the minute particles of which all things are composed and into the infinite regions of the stars, have now established that there is an emptiness of matter as we know it everywhere in the universe. Sir James Jeans thus explains the emptiness: "Choose a point in space at random, and the odds against its being occupied by a star are enormous. . . . Choose a spot

inside the solar system at random, and there are still immense odds against its being occupied by a planet or even by a comet, meteorite or smaller body. Even inside the atom we choose a point at random, and the odds against there being anything there are immense. . . . As we pass the whole structure of the universe under review, from the giant nebulae and the vast interstellar and internebular spaces down to the tiny structure of the atom, little but vacant space passes before our mental gaze. We live in a gossamer universe ; pattern, plan and design are there in abundance, but solid substance is rare." The substantiality of all objects seen or felt by touch is purely an impression on our consciousness. We are thus led to contemplate the fact that the familiar world of our senses is but an interpretation of whatever things there are by the senses we possess. Who can say what those things are in themselves, or how they will impress us at a later stage of our evolution ?

Science has made many dramatic disclosures within the last half a century or so, which prove to us that there is a veil—shall we add, possibly many veils—created by the limitations of our

perceptions and consciousness. What can be more contradictory of the world of matter, as it is presented to us through our senses, than the energies and systems of energies into which it is converted by Science ?

If the world of matter is to be thus reduced and resolved, what about the nature of our consciousness ? Modern Science started by regarding matter as the only reality and mind as its product, but has since travelled far from that position. Now it has come to a point in its analysis where matter is but a curtain which seems to hide something of the nature of mind or thought. Matter and mind are more mixed in our present view than they were before, in a continuous development, but with mind as the increasingly dominant element.

Obviously the process of evolution is incomplete, and we have to admit the fact that the mind as developed in us so far is not capable of proceeding beyond the veil of shadows which are the phenomena of our studies. This fact was appreciated in the ancient schools of philosophy in India. But they held the view that there is a higher order of perception latent in us to be unfolded in process of time, which

unfoldment can be anticipated even now by appropriate methods.

The Lord Buddha described the Reality attained by Him as Nirvâna, literally the putting out or extinction of personal self-hood, which is then seen to be but an appearance or illusion, however real our self or ego may be to us, as a dream is real to the dreamer. Seeing how largely the mind in each one of us is conditioned by past experiences, it has to be freed from their continuing impulses, the subconscious involution which has been wrought, before it can discover and express its own true nature. In the ancient schools in India, it was well understood that there is a realization possible through the careful training of our mental and spiritual faculties, the term "spiritual" implying an order of perception higher than the mind, with the adaptation of the body and the brain to that purpose. The six Darsanas were concerned in their practical aspect with the standpoint and methods of such realization.

We can only speculate as to the nature of any reality beyond our sphere of knowledge and its relation to the appearances produced within that sphere. The highest intellects in India have

attacked these questions with a boldness which has not been surpassed. According to the metaphysical conceptions of India, which, as we can see today, have, strangely enough, the power of welding our fragmentary and disjointed views—gained not from a commanding height but from nearer the ground level—the Reality is indescribable but one and complete and unchanging, and all changes in the realm of diversity, comprising both consciousness and form, are but a pattern of its making. We can gain from our place in the picture only a partial view of the whole, still a view which is sufficient to indicate to us the probable directions of our further progress.

To the religious man, God is the only reality, the conception which he gives to that term being determined by the manner of his own development and the form which gives most satisfaction to his mental and particularly his emotional wants. He seeks a God in whom he hopes to find repose and lasting happiness as a refuge from the world of disorder, injustice and suffering, which troubles him. Are these, too, but phenomena underlying which there is a plan embodying the attributes of justice, order



and love for which we instinctively seek, as ugly scaffolding might hide a perfectly beautiful edifice ? But then we must recognize the scaffolding as real while it lasts, even though it may not be permanent.

However much the attitude of religion may seem tipped in the direction of an absolute or a transcendent Being, with whom an individual who is caught in a relative order has some kind of a relation, it is based fundamentally on the need to fill a void, to supply a need, in the individual's existence. It is not that of a cold intellectual enquiry into the distinction between reality and appearance. Because of the operation of the personal want, there comes into existence the tendency to superstition, to resort to the dead end of a temporary satisfaction. Nevertheless it may be that the purest emotions associated with religion, human companionship and art are as relevant to any possible appreciation of the reality—whatever it may be—as a pure mathematical perception. A set of sound waves may constitute most glorious music or be regarded as mere vibrations in certain relationships in the air. Which of the two is the reality and which the appearance ? If we think of the fact that

there is in Nature an infinity of vibrations for which we do not have adapted sense-organs, we can imagine how much greater the reality must be than we are able to make out of our present comprehension.

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## II

### COMPLETENESS IN THOUGHT AND REALITY

IT is a strange truth, not without deep significance, that every category that we can think of implies a complement which is of the nature of an opposite.

We are well acquainted with joy and sorrow, knowledge and ignorance, day and night, life and death, and innumerable other pairs of opposites within our experience. We have also the fundamental pair, life and form, which we generalize and refine into Spirit and Matter, the two ultimates of existence. The immediate by stages of proximity and distance, shades of into a vista tapering to an ultimate. We cannot postulate any condition or principle intellectually without implying an opposite condition or principle—opposite not in the sense of conflict but of an antinomy—which is needed for completeness.

The nature of the mind is such that it thinks on the basis of differentiation. We do not become mentally cognizant of anything except on the background of what it is not. Every form of our perception must have an outline, and that outline must exclude as well as include. If there were only one color in the universe there would be no color-sense at all. We know or sense a color only by its difference from others.

Being accustomed to categories, we perceive in the background of our minds, in the process of our thinking, certain categories which we do not see in the foreground of observed phenomena. We see in the foreground, that is, in front of us (a front as extensive as our sense-observations and inferences make it), an endless diversity. The conception of a diversity implies tacitly a unity. The unity is needed in the logic of thought to balance and complete the conception of diversity, and the deeper we plumb the philosophic basis of our thought with regard to the nature of existence, the more do we realize the necessity for such a principle of unity in the universe, if that universe is capable of a philosophic summing up, if it is not just a universe of nonsense.

When we come to the realization that relativity is the birth-mark of our existence, that all manifestation, as all thinking, lies in the creation of relations, we have automatically projected into existence the polarity of an absolute. Here again by a step of thought we light upon a primordial pair of complementaries, namely, the Absolute and the relative, the relative being the manifest, the Absolute the unmanifest. Similarly, the activity which is knowing or awareness implies the duality of an object of knowledge and the knower. Every objective fact implies a subjective condition of knowledge.

Do we then posit these conceptions of a Unity, an Absolute, a subjective Reality, which are of the nature of a Beyond, merely as a definition of implications, and for attaining a sense of completeness with a mind that can formulate only in terms of dualities? Or do we, or rather does the mind, in such formulation only reflect from its angle an actuality in the universe, an actuality that may be apprehended otherwise by a consciousness that, unlike the mind, can perceive by an identity in which there is not the separation of duality?

Those who have been able to speak with an authority synonymous with authentic experience are on the side of the latter supposition, which leads us to presume that we seek completeness, we seek philosophy, because there is a completeness and philosophy in the very nature of things of which we are an integral part.

Man interprets the universe according to his conceptions, but his conceptions are inspired by a living relation to that universe, he himself being part and parcel of it, the microcosm against the macrocosm, a relation which causes him by gradations to mirror the nature of the universe in himself and perceive it by a knowledge of himself. So, too, he projects God with his mind which is a part of himself, but the idea of God in the abstract, apart from the shape of Godhead with which it may be invested, is there perpetually, hovering dimly, vaguely—a dimness and vagueness which has been carved into every conceivable shape by peering fancy according to its own nature and quality—because in that idea is the focal point of a Reality. Man seeks a Beyond, because there is a Beyond which exercises on him an insistent pressure and when he comes to the point of a

fine enough sensitiveness, exerts an attraction on him which influences his thinking.

A hypothesis is not necessarily at variance with the reality ; not even if, like Einstein's Relativity, it involves conceptions which are more of a symbol than an experience. The supposition of a reality involving categories of conception that are a logical necessity to our minds can much less be regarded as an act of pure phantasy.

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### III

## REALITY, SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE?

SUBJECT and object are obviously the two ends of a relationship in consciousness, which identifies itself with the subject but is aware of and externalizes the object. The subject is the knower, and the mind with which we gather and use the material of our knowledge—what we call knowledge—has always been regarded in India as an instrument, thus an aspect of the knower, and not the knower himself. Every kind of reaction to an external object is part of one's relationship to it, and since life includes all reactions, one of them cannot be isolated from the others. Thus it was understood that knowledge in every sense cannot be divorced from all other processes involved in living and the manner of living.



The mind is actually an interpreter and not a knower. As it interprets and presents things, in its ignorance it is capable as much of preventing knowledge of the true nature and values of things, as, when it is illumined, of bringing out and expressing those values. In spite of this realization, even in India the stream of philosophic thought has not infrequently branched out and run into the sterile sands of shifting mental constructions and reconstructions.

Western Science has admittedly taken as its province only the objective and the material, limiting even this description to such physical phenomena as the conscious subject at its lowest level is able to contact. The question as to whether Reality is subjective or objective is considered without sufficient data as to the involutions or layers of the subject, the possible depths in them, and also the inward extensions of the object related to those layers.

The materialist, using that term in a literal sense, tends to think that whatever is not a common experience must necessarily be an unreality, merely an individual phantasy or hallucination. Since the objective world of the

senses is the world common to every individual consciousness, it is to him the sole reality. Thus, any individual experience, such as the experiences of mystics in all ages, which transcends that objective reality or eclipses it, must be an illusion due to some disorder of brain or body. Yet it is to be noted that the cognizance of all natural phenomena, as analyzed by the modern material physicist, is an act of purely subjective interpretation, although the same phenomena—say, the movements of particular wave-lengths and frequencies—seem to produce the same, or apparently the same, effect on all perceiving consciousnesses.

The sense of what is real is subjective to each individual, inasmuch as it is his own consciousness which has to stamp the experience with the affirmation : "This is real to me." When an object is not present before him, even though it may continue to have objective existence, it is less of a reality to him, for his consciousness is unable fully to experience its nature merely by recollecting it. The recollection is as a pale shadow compared to the light of the tangible presence.

It may be said, then, that reality is psychological, it is a quality which belongs to an

experience of consciousness. Surely it lies only in a certain state of consciousness ; but not in *any* state. The sense of reality arises from the completeness of the particular state as well as the depth and extension in its engagement with whatever occupies or fills that state. It has therefore to be a harmonious and integrated state—the highest Reality being in the highest form of integration or harmony, which can exist only in a total comprehension. Such an experience is vivid and convincing, bringing with it a deeper quality than that of mere surface-impressions.

The whole question of Reality has been treated as resolving into how far the experience of an individual is justified by an exciting cause which has an objective existence without him. Can there be a valid inner experience unprovoked by such a cause ? When we raise the question of justification by an external cause, there is an assumption that all individuals must react in the same or like manner to the objects which we regard as the cause, and no allowance is made for individual differences in sensitivity and capacity to perceive, let alone individual peculiarities. All are limited to the same spectrum

of experience, whereas actually the whole trend in the growth of consciousness is to bring into its expansion more and more of the intermediate shades, as well as colors lying below and above the common gamut of experience. Similarly, in the matter of an inner experience, what one perceives in a certain range of sensitivity or sensations is not perceivable in another.

A phrase of Beethoven, or any other composer of his order in Eastern or Western music, will strike a musically sensitive imagination with a sense of exalted beauty, but will sound to others merely as a sequence of notes. Is the experience of such beauty of the nature of Reality, or is it merely an incidental ? The whole sensation of music, or pleasure in it, lies in a subjective experience of proportion and order, which can have color or any other variable sensation as medium. The proportion and the order create the mood or other psychological effect produced by the music. The experience consists in a certain kind of response, more a feeling than anything else, a motion of spirit matching the relation in the notes and the order and proportion present in the musical phrases.

whole world at any time who has the capacity to experience that beauty of music, would that experience therefore be invalidated by the fact that in this matter he is in a minority of one ?

If the Reality is subjective, how is the subjective related to the objective ? Surely it lies in the connecting link, which must be objective-subjective, not simply a consciousness which is objectively aware, for in that case we must be aware only of vibrations. What we call reality must include responses to vibrations beyond the scales of our present senses, which responses may be subtle feelings, as well as what the affected consciousness is able to make or construct out of those responses.

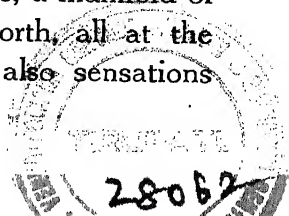
When the word "responses" is used, it must be remembered that the response is a certain translation of that which is objective—the vibration—into a sensation, be it color, sound, or any other. What is the secret of this translation, and wherein does it reside ? We trace it to a particular brain-centre, but the centre if probed objectively will not give up the secret. There is in that centre or whatever lies behind it (the field of forces of which it is the centre) an organ of consciousness,

an internal instrument, which translates that movement into a certain type of sensation and no other. There may be an infinity of possible sensations, depending partly on the vibrations and partly on the nature of the internal organ. Does the secret of sensation lie in continuity, the result of frequency and succession, or does it depend only on the rhythm established by the single wave?

It is a fascinating thought, which cannot be dismissed as mere fancy, that a different type of organ might give a translation into a different language, that is, into different sensations which we might think do not exist in the present scheme of things. One can imagine a play of fragrances, comparable to a melody or harmony. We are told that on a higher plane the consciousness sees, hears, touches and feels at the same time. We can see philosophically that there must be a synthesis of the differentiated. Thus, there can be a total impression in the form of an instantaneous order of harmony which must be, in physical terms, a manifold of senses, sound, color, and so forth, all at the same time, possibly including also sensations unknown down here.

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The whole question whether Reality is subjective or objective is viewed from the wrong end of the telescope when it is discussed on the supposition that the objective is the sole reality, and the subjective but fleeting cloud-forms in the brain.

Most people in the world would regard the touch of a solid material substance as more real than a thought, emotion or feeling, because that substance is permanent, whereas the other experiences are transitory, and the substance offers a certain resistance which impresses them with its nature. But even then, our experience of that substance, such as it is, is a subjective phenomenon ; it is a modification of consciousness. It is not inconceivable that there can be a purely subjective phenomenon arising from an inner initiative which has the same convincing quality as the material object.

In the sense of reality with which the endlessly diverse experiences possible may be invested by the recipient consciousness, are there not degrees, some of them capable of eclipsing, almost superseding others ? Obviously these degrees depend upon the vividness or intensity of the experiences, the extent to which

they affect one's entire nature and being. The very word "real" implies a subjective feeling or a judgment. There may be a judgment of reality overbearing a particular feeling in the balances of the consciousness. We may decide as between one thing and another: "That is more real," either because we respond more vividly and intensely to it, or because it is more abiding and we respond to it more continuously. In any case, it is our consciousness which is the judge (though it is notably varying in its moods and focus), and the judgment is given on experience and comparison of experiences, and each experience is real in its place and within its limits. If this is so, then there are degrees of reality, though these degrees may vary theoretically from the limit of infinity to the limit of zero or nothingness.

Granting that there can be degrees of reality in experiences, what is the highest conceivable by us? Apart from such testimony as we have in this matter, we can see that if there is in some part of our consciousness an experience of a Principle from which is derived the inner quality or nature of each and every thing in the world—a nature



corresponding in some degree to its outer aspect—that experience would include not only the subjective natures of all things, but also possibly a unity within them belonging to the whole and not realized in the parts. It would be an experience comparable with no other experience, and possible only if there is something in us—in our consciousness or soul—which is capable of touching or being affected in some degree by that universal Principle. Since the latter imparts to each thing its inner quality, the quality of its indwelling life, of its latent or partially-awakened consciousness, each one of us also gains the quality of his individuality from the same Principle.

The experience of that universal Principle—we might call it Being, as all existence is derived from it—can come to any one only at that point to which his subjective development or inner consciousness has risen. It may come only in certain aspects to which he happens individually to be receptive. It may be only partial and fleeting, the faintest of faint touches which he has had of it. But whatever the form of this touch, experience or encounter, it will bring with it its own authenticity, and though the whole

world may scout and reject its reality, it will be reality to the individual himself. Such an experience would be wholly subjective in the sense that he can share it with no other, but objective, too, because it would comprehend both the inner consciousness and the outer nature, or as we might call them, the subject and the object of the whole, these being the two inseparable sides of every single manifestation.

The gulf that seems to lie between the subjective and the objective is equally a gulf between oneself and others. For, in our outer constitutions we are separate and different, and unity lies only remotely within. But the sense of that unity acquires definiteness as we withdraw into ourselves, that is, into the sphere of a more refined perception, away from identification with outer things. In the measure of our consciousness of the unity is our sense of reality, since the reality is the unity pervading the heart of all diversities.

What is the nature of the experience which is the reality, none can say except those who have the knowledge of it, and they cannot communicate it to others. We have words only for the things which we have experienced in

common with others. Even to those who have knowledge of a reality far transcending our highest experiences, it may be that for the greater part by far the Reality is the Unknown. But from the standpoint of the metaphysics which seeks to sum up all that we can know of the universe in terms of the life and consciousness in each thing, the experience of the unity must be also the experience of the totality of things, in that aspect in which there is the possibility of such a summation—the aspect which is open to the Unity, although it is interpreted in differences. That aspect is the aspect of consciousness or awareness which is in all things, in which (as we see in ourselves) there is both unity and difference, life and limitation, giving rise to what we call the subjective and the objective in our experience.

If the unity is a summation of everything, the experience of it must include the experience of every partial sum, all the lesser orders included in the total order. To a consciousness released from the thralldom of time as we experience it in our physical brains, the sequence of events and experiences would be a simultaneity. The totality of its comprehension must include

that it can create out of its experiences with its innate sense of order, beauty and genius for composition. If a million different notes can be simultaneously present in a consciousness, all the music that it can compose out of those notes, all the music that would be present in those notes—awaiting only the magical wand that would call that music into existence—would be to it the most glorious reality. The experience of all possible objects subjectively, that is, from within, and from within to without up to the limit of their objectivity or manifestation, plus the realization of the values in every possible construction which can be put upon it, the nature of every possible sequence or order that can be created out of it, would make the subjective-objective totality for the entity so experiencing.

The subjective Science or the Science of the Self, as it has been called in India, sees in the self or experiencing subject, which is imprisoned as an imperishable and evolving entity in its perishable frame, the possibility of an extension, from every ascending node of which the objects external to it cover a wider field, exhibit extensions to match, shine in a different light,

and strike the subject with a host of new significances.

Until we can respond with the entire extension of ourselves, with the whole scale of our being, to all that that being can embrace within the scope of its direct knowledge and action, we do not have the experience, the data, needed to form a conception of what is the Real, apart from the commonplaces of our acquaintance. Until we can thus respond, Reality is to us only a term with certain associations derived from our limited experiences, but a term which covers unknown and unsuspected depths of meaning.

To sum up our present knowledge of what the Reality may be—not what the Reality *is*—the Reality must lie in an experience more convincing than any other. That experience must be a knowledge of things as they are—of oneself and others. But the distinction just mentioned does not exist in inward truth, since the inmost Self of oneself and that of others is one and the same. Real knowledge is not merely of the outer form, but also of its inner extensions and of the indwelling life.

Each distinct form has its own specific quality of life which it is designed to express. If knowledge of a thing is to be perfect and complete, it must include, or rather, must primarily consist in a knowledge of this quality, which is in the nature of the psychic entity which that thing inwardly is. Hence, knowledge is not merely intellectual but must also have in it the quality of apprehension that belongs to the psyche, that is, the quality of feeling or appreciation. In true knowledge, thought and feeling are impersonally blended. Since the inner nature of the thing must pervade its outer form, knowledge of that inner nature must include knowledge of that form, as well as knowledge of all the manifestations of the life within the form. If the inmost being of any one thing is a section of the universal Being, knowledge of the latter or of the Unity must bring with it knowledge of the multiplicity, that is, all the particulars, and the relation between the universal and the particulars. Such manifold knowledge lends itself to innumerable forms of synthesis, each a natural expression in evolution.

A synthesis is a unity, and the unity invests the parts with a meaning not previously present

in them. Thus, in the process of evolution which is an unfoldment from another point of view, a host of hidden meanings comes to light—hidden, yet existing from the beginning. Nothing appears in evolution of such meaning or significance but was there already from the very beginning. Thus all the poetry, the beauty, the wonder, the significance successively and increasingly unfolded in any process or scheme of evolution is “given” in the elements of that scheme—their *tattva* and *tanmâtra*—and in the unity that plays through those elements.

The Reality, though one, manifests in gradations, but at each grade as a whole, sufficient unto itself. From this point of view, the experience of the reality is an experience of a whole—a whole in significance and not merely as a composition of parts. The reality that is in the whole expresses itself in each complete part, which is also a whole in itself. To imagine that the reality is on one side and the unreal on the other, with an impassable gulf between them, such as we may conceive to exist between the Absolute and the relative, may represent a certain truth in the sharpness of the distinction

between them, but it is not the whole truth of practical experience.

If reality lies in an order which is a harmony and has a significance, that order is environed by chaos, which is in the process of being reduced or built into the order. To the extent a section of the total order is complete and the idea hidden within it manifested, whether in an individual or a natural grouping, the reality is represented by and capable of being experienced in the wholeness and beauty of that section.

The existence of an infinite number of sections in an ascending series would make the pursuit of Reality a never-ending quest. If God is the Reality, we touch Reality when we touch the Divine Nature. But we may travel in Him—that is, in that Nature—infinately without finding the other shore. He is the shoreless ocean of thought and wisdom, which can never be fathomed. He is the immeasurable of which each varying measure has to be a just and perfect measure ; and there is a measure of His Being in every single unit of creation.

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## IV

### THE REALITY IN OURSELVES

IT has been said by all those who have been able to penetrate the spiritual realms in a waking state that it is quite impossible to express their reality in any physical plane language. I use the words "spiritual realms" advisedly, because they are, from our point of view, not one but many. It is impossible to express the experiences of those realms in our language, because our language has no words in which to express them. All the words which we use are words which identify our past experiences. If we have experienced something even once, in order to refer to that experience again we have or may coin a suitable word. So with all the words in our dictionary; they refer to experiences that we have had in the past. Further, they are experiences which other people have had, because language is a medium of

communication. A word is used in a particular language to refer to something which the other person will also be able to understand. If all other people have not had that experience, at least some of them must have had it. Otherwise, if it is something which is unidentifiable and incommunicable, then words are of no use at all, so far as that experience is concerned.

The Reality, according to those who have some knowledge of it, is the Unknown, which does not mean that it is an ever-receding, ever-elusive, hypothetical X which we postulate and may pursue, but can never touch. In one sense, the Reality is of that nature, because, as has been said, one can enter the flame but never touch it, that is to say, one can go further and further into the Reality, the Divine Consciousness, but will never be able to touch it in the sense of coming to its heart and identifying oneself consciously with that heart.

The spiritual universe is as endless as, if not even more endless (if such a phrase may be permitted) than the material universe. It may be said to represent the infinite Being of God ; the material universe may then be described as representing His physical body. In between

the two are depths and extensions corresponding to the gradations of consciousness which appear in evolution and which man may identify in himself. We cannot imagine an endless process of Becoming. At least it must tend to an end or limit which would be a unification of the Divine Being with the Becoming, of the eternal subject with the object, the all-knower with that which is to be known. Or, to put the same idea in familiar phraseology, Matter and Spirit, instead of being apart and opposite, must become blended and fused.

This consummation takes place, we may suppose, at the end of a *Manvantara* or Divine period, and it is useless for us to think of these periods in terms of incomprehensible figures. H. P. Blavatsky does give us certain figures from Occult and Eastern sources to represent these vast periods, called *Yugas* in Samskrit. But then, such a period is not a mere lapse of time, the sleep of a Rip Van Winkle. It conveys a definite process of change ; a series of successive happenings, representing a definite transformation. As we cannot with our present limited consciousness encompass all the processes which lie ahead of us, to be worked out

tly according to the laws of causation, whether we speak of a billion or a trillion years, is all the same as regards the degree of result-enlightenment to us. Time as a measure of change and experience is obviously an exceedingly variable quantity.

We can only think up to a certain limit, which is like the horizon we may perceive as we look out from a mountain-top, and that limit, to the process of becoming, is where type and archetype are one. That is to say, the stages of things evolve and ultimately approximate to the archetypes, which have been there from the time in the midst of the process as their atomic nucleus, unperceived because as yet objectified.

That is what Plato meant when he spoke of the world of Ideas—which has often been translated as the world of Forms—because every thing which is distinct from another must in a sense be represented by a form, since if all the forms are struck away, there is only the unity. Even on the highest plane, the plane of first manifestation, there must be a form of some sort, for form is inseparable from manifestation. From this standpoint, the end of the evolutionary

vista is when everything is brought or reduced to that final point at which it becomes charged with the significance and meaning that has been there all the time, but the meaning is then patent instead of latent.

From one point of view, the Reality is immeasurable with any of our limited measures, and hence is the ever-transcendent. But in another and a more practical sense, reality is ever that which is real to us. It is immanent in things. The word "reality" conveys a relative idea, implying the unreality of certain things we believe in or have experienced. If someone speaks of a reality which is altogether an abstraction, incapable of ever being realized within ourselves, then that reality is completely out of relation to us and incomprehensible. We can have no practical use for it, except as a counter to play with. If such a fictitious counter is given the sole value, then all other experiences are divested of their real values.

The ignorant mind does not believe that there can be a reality which it does not share, and asks for proofs of what a certain person has experienced as reality. Now, that is essentially a

topsy-turvy procedure, because everything in the world is judged and evaluated in terms of what one perceives to be the real, and reality cannot be expressed in terms other than what is real to oneself. To ask for proof of a realization that has not yet come to the interrogator is to ask for something which can never be given.

A particular experience may be an illusion from another and a higher point of view. Even then, for the time being, it is real to the person who has the experience. A headache is a headache, in spite of all that may be said by believers in self-hypnotism and the outright denial of whatever one may consider to be evil. We may be dreaming the evil, but that dream is real to us while it lasts. People have been known to suffer physically in a nightmare, which shows that the dream-consciousness is not unrelated to the whole man and his physical and physiological life. Dreams have a relation to the consciousness of the waking state, though we have so far been able to make little out of that relationship.

In India the view has been held and stressed over and over again that all that we experience on the earth-plane is unreal. It is a universe of

*māya* or illusion in which we dwell. But while this may be so from the standpoint of an absolute Reality, we are in the midst of experiences with which we are practically concerned, and to dismiss them as unreal without discovering their unreality does not help us to awake from the dream that they are said to be. I believe it is not possible for any one of us to jump to the ultimate. We can profitably examine only the experiences which come to us at the point where we are. We can, of course, talk of the ultimate, even as we may talk of the geometry of space and time. We can have a mental representation of that which is needed to complete the circle of our experience, to relate experience to purpose. If there is a connection between the future and the present, we have to relate the present to what is immediately ahead. Is that which is ahead a state fundamentally different from what we are experiencing at present? It is that question with which we are practically concerned.

What is the nature of that consciousness which can know or experience the Reality, in so far as it is possible for us to have some idea of it now? If we have some knowledge of a

goal even in terms of such experience as we have at present, we will have a pole or an axis round which our activities may turn. Even if the goal be far off, we can see the goal as through a telescope with lenses that are clear and scientifically fashioned. The goal being not away from us, but within ourselves, what we do then is to sense in ourselves the direction of Truth, that truth of which even a faint perception acts like a magnet or a scent, enabling us to follow an unseen trail out of the mazes of our experience.

The consciousness which we talk of as the real is one which has definitely broken through its present limitations, fetters as they are realistically called in the East. The Spiritual Path, in the East, is divided into stages, on each of which certain fetters are cast off, and the end of this Path is described as Liberation. It is obvious that Liberation is not merely an end, but also a process. The end does not come all of a sudden, without previous cause, although this quality of an unexpected suddenness has been associated with it through an identification of the liberated consciousness with that faculty which functions outside the limitations of the mind, the faculty of Buddhi.



The vision of the goal may come in a moment—it does come swiftly and suddenly—like a shaft of light breaking through the clouds. But then the clouds close up again. To have an intelligence that is secure in its serenity and clear, one has to put an end once for all to the causes which cloud it. The removal of these causes is not the work of one single moment, but a process of discrimination exercised over the whole range of necessary experience. The petals have to grow silently among the enclosing sepals, even if the blossoming is the phenomenon of one beautiful moment.

The consciousness with which we can enter the realm of Reality is a consciousness which is free of the momentum, the accumulation, and the never-ceasing influence of its past. We might call that Karma, which is both psychological and physical.

Karma is what we have created for ourselves of tendencies operating from within and forces precipitated from without. Whether that creation is in the sphere of our own psyche, or in that larger outer sphere in which there are relations with other entities, it is all from the past. We have to be free of that past which both veils

and impedes us. It is when the consciousness is able to see and realize the nature of the bonds which it has wound round itself, that it is able to free itself from those bonds, the limitations which it has put upon itself on the path of its forthgoing. It becomes disillusioned, in a beautiful sense of that word.

The simple consciousness—that is, the consciousness in its infancy—is attracted into a very subtle movement, and that movement is a motion first of a slight and then an increasingly strengthening attachment to and desire for sensations of every sort. Then, the early motions gradually gain momentum until they become a regular whirlpool; the consciousness, caught in that whirlpool, moves round and round for a long long time in a vicious spiral. Our attachments have a manner of growing as well as deepening, because one thing gradually attaches us to others, by association. Eventually, through the exercise of that discrimination which the person or consciousness inevitably develops, the whole of this whirlpool or maelstrom is straightened out. What we may do, then, is to use our free intelligence to rid our minds consciously of the illusions to which we have

become subject, the various forms of conditioning which we have undergone. Liberation, in the sense of an outer freedom from limiting circumstances, will follow ere long the gaining of the inner freedom.

Since the land of the Spirit is the land of Truth, where everything is true and we do not see things in a false or misleading light, where there are no shadows to be mistaken for substance, in order to explore that realm or even to enter it, we need a consciousness which is free of the limitations which it has put upon itself, limitations which may be described as a prison-house or an enclosing egg-shell. It is a shell because it effectively shuts off the possibility of sensing the finer vibrations, all the more delicate phrases in the language of Nature, the poetry that is ever present even in this phenomenal world. The poetry of life is not a phantasy, but a truth. We have first to burst this shell, in order that we may have a consciousness or perception which is free enough or fine enough to range over the pure forms of Truth which are uttered to us in this external world in syllables of Beauty.

Instead of poetry, one might call it music, and perceive in that music a perfect architectural

pattern. It is a pattern which underlies everything that is taking place. Architecture has been called congealed music. Architecture is objective, music is essentially subjective, and in perfect beauty, subject and object are unified. The meaning which is in the form comes out through the form. The meaning is the subject which is present in that object of form. When an object, expression or movement is an object of perfect beauty the limitation which is the essence of form ceases to limit, in fact it begins to expand with its indwelling meaning. When a form is perfectly beautiful, it begins to express the light which is within.

Though there is this shell of our creation, composed of our false ideas, phantasies, the various vicious circles in which we revolve, this whole structure can be broken, or to use a better word, dissolved, once for all. There is a possibility of dissolving this structure, which seems so closed, because there is a way from above which enters, as it were, from another dimension. It is a ray from the spiritual centre within ourselves, a ray which has always been present and is still there, unless of course the personality, the man of the material mind,

has cut himself off completely from the Divine Light. We are told that sometimes in very rare cases this can happen, but it does not ordinarily. So long as there is that thread between the personality and, let us say, the Monad or the highest Self, passing through the Ego, there is a possibility, in the light of the knowledge which it brings, to discriminate between the real and the false, and to begin the process of disillusionment, the dissipation of that *māya* which each one has created for himself.

This is what we imply when we state in Theosophical terms that Manas, which is intelligence or thought, instead of being under the evil sway of *Kāma* or desire, has to be withdrawn from that attachment and united with Buddhi. Buddhi is the faculty which is awake to Truth. It can be translated as Truth-consciousness, startling as such a possibility may seem. There is a consciousness, or the potentiality of a consciousness, in man which unerringly hits the truth. It is incapable of giving rise to aught else than truth. That consciousness is free, but in its freedom does not deviate from the truth. In fact it is its absolute freedom from

every imposition from without that makes it possible for it to express the truth, which is within itself. We can see how this can be by approaching the matter from another direction.

Imagine a person whose whole consciousness is so charged with an appreciation of the beautiful that he can have no thought, no modification of consciousness, which is not beautiful. The consciousness is so perfect and so full of the innate sense of beauty that it cannot move without that movement expressing some beauty. We can think of that as theoretically possible. When I say "beauty," we must remember that beauty is not necessarily what people regard as beauty. We often think of what is pleasing, ingenious or intriguing as beautiful. When something gives us a certain gratification, we often say how lovely it is. The gratification may be there, but there may not be beauty in the gratification. Beauty is Truth, and Truth is Beauty, if the beauty is divine, and of course the Logos is all Truth. Therefore, that aspect of every man which is an aspect of the Logos must be beautiful, too. Truth is the life, and Beauty is the form. If there is a possibility of

a consciousness being saturated with beauty in its purest, most spiritual, transcendent and perfect sense, surely there is a possibility of a consciousness similarly saturated with the essence of Truth, and in it there can be no modification, no form, which is not a flowering forth of Truth.

The word *Buddhi* is usually translated as Spiritual Intuition. But "intuition" conveys but part of the meaning of that Samskrit word. It is a Divine Intuition which needs no teachers from without. It is not conjecture, hunch or wishful thinking. It is a faculty which speaks only the language of truth. All falsehood has been eliminated from the nature of the man who is able to exercise it all the time. In its pure light, all that men call waking, all that is a reality to them here, is but dreaming. Everything that seems so real to us, so tangible and solid in the experiences of our waking state, is but a dream. We believe in self-deception, make-believe, glamour, appearance, convention, in all the things that are no better than masks, distortions and pretences—all contradictions of truth.

The spiritual man is one who has cut through all that completely ; all that illusion and pretence

is stripped from the eye which perceives. He is the man who has unified dreaming and waking. That is to say, he has gone beyond the waking state to a state which is dreaming in the most wonderful sense. It is not dreaming with that inchoate, blind, irrational consciousness which is our usual dreaming, but dreaming with a faculty which has absorbed the essence of reason—not the dreamings of “the unconscious,” to use the modern psychological term, but dreams that are dreams at one end and creations at the other.

If we can identify dreaming with sense, order, action, creation and achievement, that is the state of waking plus dreaming to which the spiritual man has attained.

In the region of consciousness, Manas is the outward-turned, because the mind sees everything as outside itself. It objectifies even what it observes within itself. Manas represents waking, whereas Buddhi, the intuition, represents dreaming. And we might say that Âtman, which is beyond Buddhi, represents the dreamless state of bliss, which is the one root of every perfect creation. We may regard the Âtman as the root which puts forth its



creation in the region of Manas through the stalk of Buddhi. The stalk derives its life and impulse from that root. You may imagine the slender graceful stalk as that of a lotus breathing out each moment a perfect flower, a fresh creation. For that perfect flower, Manas provides the material; it is material which Manas has recorded and accumulated.

There is a fourth state spoken of in Samskrit books. It transcends the other three and is a synthesis of them all. But of that synthesis we can imagine little or say little that is not likely to mislead.

It is all right to speak of such things and very pleasant to contemplate them, but where are we in all this? We are on the border-line between the land of shadows and the land of light. That is why we seek the Real, as in the prayer: "From the unreal, lead me to the Real." In India, the Devas or Angels, are said to cast no shadows, partly because when they appear they are materializations not sufficiently dense to cast a shadow, but I think also because they (at least the higher Devas) are forms of light, the light of Divine Omniscience which pervades the manifested universe. That

Omniscience works through an infinity of aspects, and each aspect sufficiently defined is, as it were, an Intelligence. This is a very wonderful thought, though difficult to comprehend. There are millions upon millions of Dhyân Chohans, to use the word of the early Theosophical works, Divine Intelligences; they are the Intelligences through which the Divine Mind and the Divine Intuition operate.

From darkness to Light is our motto—from the darkness of ignorance and selfishness to the light of spiritual knowledge and unity. As we endeavour unremittingly to dissipate the falseness within ourselves, we gain true knowledge. That is the only way to gain it, not through books or lectures, all of which may give a great deal of valuable information and theory. If what is in another mind is bodily conveyed to our minds and accepted with certain modifications, that is not true knowledge. We discard our illusions only as we see through them; as we shed our illusions, we ascend to the plane of Truth, where we realize it.

It is not possible to gain any spiritual knowledge or wisdom, except by preparing ourselves to receive it. There has to be the virgin soil in

which the divine seed can strike its roots and grow. If the soil is not pure but contaminated, saturated with all kinds of undesirable substances, it has to go through purification by fire and water before it can be fit to receive the seed of all-knowledge. That is why all occultists, all spiritual teachers, speak of the life of the seeker as most important. In order to gain true knowledge, there must be the faculty to acquire it. To develop this faculty which is innate in each man, the barriers to its sprouting and growth have to be removed. And the barriers to understanding, to spiritual growth and realization, are our ways of life, of thought, emotion and action, from which we have to wean ourselves. We need to make a complete break with the world, with its static conventions and ways, which does not mean that we must outwardly do something to outrage it. But we must be prepared to think and act alone, loyal to the truth as we perceive it, seeking it for ourselves in every matter and not accepting it second-hand.

Such a withdrawal of the heart from the world and its ways will lead in reality to a closer unity with it in spirit—a unity which does not exist at present—for its service and redemption. The

less we use the world for our own purposes and depend upon it as a parasite, the more we shall be able to love those who are in it and sympathize with them in their struggles. There is reality and unreality both in ourselves and others. The unreality lies in the traffic for profit and pleasure, the reality in individual realization. The unreal is what we affect, put up with and conform to for expediency and comfort. The Real is within us in the forms created by a pure consciousness to express the truth that belongs to its manifestation.



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## REALITY IN OUR LIVING

THE greatest problem for any one who is in search of Truth—Truth which cannot be apart from his being—is *how* to live. This is so because whatever the truth may be, it has to be experienced in completeness of being. If there is any element of consciousness outside the truth we experience, it will necessarily conflict with that experience, or detract from that completeness in which there can be the sense of an ultimate end or state. The truth we seek must completely fill our being, and not be excluded from any contacts arising from the energies of that being as they flow out. In other words, it must fill ourselves and every expression of ourselves in thought, feeling and action. The experience of it is necessarily within oneself, but it must also have the definition

sense of void, no loss of reality in passing from that which is within to contacts with things that are without.

Essentially, Truth is an absolute and lies in an integrity of being. But it can be made to manifest only in forms of finiteness and relationship. The immediate field into which it can descend is that within which our own consciousness moves and functions, that is, the field of our everyday thoughts and action. The discovery of the nature of Truth is in reality an uncovering of it. What covers, that is, suppresses and eclipses it, are the forms of consciousness which will not fit it, into which it cannot enter. So we have to prepare the ground for the reception of Truth, and that is the ground of one's living, from which the forms or experiences of one's consciousness cannot be separated.

The question may be put: Do we first perceive the Truth and shape the forms in accordance with it, or do we shape the forms as we can and let a certain something, an aspect of Truth—it may be a new idea, a hitherto unperceived significance—manifest itself in those forms? The creation of the form and the filling of the form with life which is a

manifestation of the Truth are a joint phenomenon. Subjectively we perceive ; objectively we create ; and it is the stream of life or manifestation which constitutes the subject-object unity. The first creation in the process of self-realization, which is the discovery of the hidden Truth, is the creation or re-creation of ourselves as a vessel of Truth. "Ourselves" means our living, our every thought and action. We have to mould all of it and every part nearer to the goal of our aspiration.

And this is a work of art, the greatest of all existing arts. It is not an art dealing with a limited objective, a single fixed canvas and its theme, but an art into whose creation the ever-changing energies that flow from our inner being have to be led and embodied. Every fleeting thought, every passing fancy can make or mar the picture, which is to be the perfect representation of the inner being, the Truth in oneself. That inner Self is a unity, we feel it as a unity because of the perfect harmony that reigns within it. But that harmony is broken, as the energies from it, meeting with resistances of various sort, are thrown upon the screen of outer phenomena, making the picture of our life. To make this

picture correspond to the inner harmony, to create in our living that perfection which is within ourselves, must be our constant attempt.

The lack of accord between the inner and the outer is the cause of all our frustration and unhappiness. Because of it, inwardly we beat our wings in vain ; outwardly we lack the divine afflatus, as well as the sense of an unconfused direction. A truth which is purely metaphysical, in the sense that the rays emerging therefrom do not beat upon every aspect of our nature, is not an experienced truth or the fullness of Truth ; it will not be felt as truth, because of man's constitution. Man is a whole, and the truth with which he will be content must fill that whole, that is, that truth must be embodied in his life and in every act that is a part of that life. We cannot escape this conclusion if we seek a Truth which has the nature of an ultimate or an end, and is not merely a means to something else.

Anyone who sets out to master the art of living in this practical manner cannot but discover how difficult it is. Even a little study of ourselves will show that there are in us so many



loose and frayed ends, which we seem unable to take hold of and put together satisfactorily.

The vital questions to be put to ourselves in each and every situation are : What should be the nature of our approach to it ; what the nature of our thoughts and feelings therein ; what action shall we perform ? In the mass of circumstances which beset us on every side, what is the direction of true progress ?

Even after we have realized that life is a problem in this sense, we lack the will to take ourselves in hand effectively. We seem to lay slow siege to Truth, whatever may be the form in which we envisage it for the moment. It assumes in relation to our experiences a different form from time to time. Even when we feel we are facing the direction of the truth we seek, we do not seem able to go much beyond the point we have so far attained. There is not in us the quality of a direct attack, the spirit needed to overcome difficulties and break down obstacles. The task is difficult because it includes many lesser tasks and activities, it means a new way of life, a completely different aim and orientation from what we have hitherto pursued.

What is first required is that each one of us should discover a supreme interest, which will gradually transform our lives, and then pursue it one-pointedly. There may be many who would prefer to call it a supreme objective, a supreme ideal or state. Yet the word "interest" is more pervasive, since it can operate in the field of our normal experience and activity, as well as embrace or even find its main focus in that which is beyond us. If we set up an ideal entirely unconnected with our lives, then the cause of all our troubles in connection with the latter remains untouched.

We may have an ideal ; it may be to come into some relation with "God" or some great Being. That Being or ideal is then set apart from what we consider the common herd of humanity, towards whom we are content to be indifferent. Perhaps we even despise our fellowman, because our interest is centred in that ideal or Being we profess to adore and serve. Thus there is a separation between the object to which we look up—possibly to fulfil some sub-conscious want—and the contacts and incidents of our daily living. The object is but an image set up in a compartment of our

thoughts, and our activities, motivated as before, continue to run along the well-worn grooves that have been made by them. The practical problems of our life, arising out of the various relations in which we find ourselves, are not brought any nearer to a solution by shifting the focus of our interest to the separate and independent centre which we have created for it.

We have yet to discover the true incentive or the inner will which can have an over-mastering effect upon our lives, and yet be present in every circumstance and incident. Our ideal should be, not to leave the world before we have learnt to bear with it and help it, or to escape to some seventh heaven ; it must be one which is ever present with us, anywhere and everywhere. At every point in our lives it should enable us to summon the energies needed to meet the situation of the moment in the best possible manner.

All books dealing with the spiritual path stress the necessity for one-pointedness, because if we wander here and there, if the effects of our various actions are to cancel one another, if we are undecided as to the course to pursue,

if we oscillate like a pendulum between pairs of opposites, then it is obvious we cannot produce a definite or cumulative result. If there is not the continuity of application or process needed to bring about a certain consummation, that consummation has to wait until such effort is possible. Therefore, one of the "jewels of conduct" required to tread the Path is the virtue of one-pointedness.

But that one point should be like the top of a crown towards which all lines of our action naturally converge, though each may have its immediate end and motive. The interest which reigns supreme over our life should absorb all other interests, but without abolishing them. Indeed, it should run through the latter, and transmute them. All lesser loves must become channels for and integrated in a greater love, and thus partake of the nature of the latter. The one-pointedness of the truly spiritual man manifests as a universality of interest and sympathy which is calculated to make him myriad-minded, an epithet that has been given to Shakespeare because of the extraordinary insight he displays into every type of character, vocation, and human experience.

If there is a constant aspiration—towards Truth, God, state of Being, or anything else—which will bring within its circle everything else of lesser interest, we will be able to live from moment to moment with an inspiration which is never-changing in essence, though ever-varying in form. The heart of the aspiration remains unchanged its essential quality the same, though the rainbow effect of it may vary from circumstance to circumstance. Our inner state has to be so established that it is ever open towards a mid-heaven, or to vary the metaphor, revolves round a pole star which will crown with its beneficent rays every aspect of our life. The interest which springs from the deepest part of our nature is one which is capable of endless evolution, and can comprehend every subordinate and subsidiary interest developed through the differentiating processes of life.

Until we have discovered that centre in ourselves, where we may remain fixed, yet from which we will be able to face every direction of our life, activity and contact with the external world, life is bound to be unsatisfactory because of a disturbance of balance, a disequilibrium within ourselves which constantly upsets and

frets us. Each one of us has to try and delve as deeply as possible within himself, to see what is his true interest and how he will define it to the outer consciousness of his mind. We are interested in friends, in all kinds of activities, in art, in various intellectual pursuits. Is there something in our hearts with a value which can equally find vent in all these channels ?

There is a principle deep within ourselves—indeed, it is the very core of our being—which is the origin of every kind of good, equally for ourselves and for others. If we can touch it, even for a moment, withdrawing from everything else, we may be able to bring out of that moment a sense of something of imperishable value, present in everyone and everything, a value which we cannot miss afterwards in any judgments of our fellow human beings, or any action we contemplate touching their welfare, or even that of the lesser lives that are within the universal brotherhood.

What is needed is the unification of our nature, the harmonization of its different parts, so that they may constitute a coherent and abiding whole. If each of us sincerely examines himself, his unspoken thoughts, his reactions to

people and things, he will realize how far he is from that state of internal harmony in which alone is completeness possible, and without which all his actions must be partial actions. To achieve wholeness in ourselves is to be able to live fully and apply the whole of our being and our consciousness at any point of our contact with the external world. Unfortunately, we have developed strata of very different sorts in our nature, a stratum of hardness here, and a layer of quicksand there, so that we are hard and resistant in one part, and too ready to give way in another. We are restless and excited over some things, and inert and insensitive towards others. There is the conflict of a constant contradiction in our personalities.

Modern psychologists talk of a state of neurosis, in which there is set up an artificial self alienated from the real self, and then there is a war between these two entities. What they call the real self, the frustration of which they think is the root-cause of the malady, may not be—indeed is not—the real self from the wider standpoint of Theosophy. But without the exaggeration of factors present in the neurotic personality, the elements of neurosis, that is, of

a duality resulting in periodical conflicts, are present in all of us. To do away with the duality in ourselves, in the sense of discordant energies simultaneously present in our nature, is the work of Yoga, which means literally union or unification.

The Samskrit word "yoga" has a variety of connotations, but the very heart of yoga, the central aim in it, is a harmonization, first of oneself, and then of oneself with others, which is maintained even in the midst of strife and conflict. There is diversity on the surface, but the sense of unity arises from within, and that unity creates a state of harmony which is like the deep waters of the ocean that remain quiet even under the tossings on the surface. It is that sense of unity which is at the root of both universal love and a universal interest.

Our whole nature has to be pervaded by that sense. Thus we are attuned to the true nature of all things. Before we can gain such inner tranquillity there has to be the elimination of the inner causes of conflict. Without a purification of our entire nature it is impossible to bring its constituent elements into accord with one another. It is only the true which can accord with the



truth ; therefore the false has to be eliminated. Purgation precedes paradise, and the paradise is a sweet harmony within oneself. The strings of our nature may be few, but it is possible to make endless melody thereon. Purification, unification, and dedication, which is the binding of the lower with the higher, are the tasks to be accomplished by each in himself.

Dedication is not the passive state of merely feeling devout. It must be the expression of an inner will which is translated into a dynamic impulse in every faculty. It must be an unbreakable yet most adaptable will, operating in every direction. All action arising from that inner will is pure action. The lives of all of us, however important we may deem our activities to be, are merely a prelude to what is to come. The past is always a preparation for the future. All that we build with the outer nature is but a scaffolding for an inner temple.

Outer and inner : there is in our minds a division between the two, which is not in the nature of things. What is it to which we—meaning this externalized consciousness of ours—wish to dedicate ourselves? To the One who is the heart of every being—or to the

innumerable multiplicities which are the expressions of that One? Obviously *both*. So long as we make a distinction between the two, we have not rightly understood either. Action in a spirit of pure love that gives rise to no reaction is above the pairs of opposites. Love of the one Supreme Being who is in all cannot be detached from our best will and service to the manifestations of Him in those who are around us.

Suppose we meet some great and wonderful person who moves us to the deepest reverence. Then we come across some one very different, a pilgrim no doubt on this earth, but travel-worn and stained, clad in rags, metaphorically speaking. He evokes a very different attitude from us. Yet there should be in us a certain sense of unity which helps us to accept in our hearts that great and wonderful person side by side with the other man, who seems to exist only to bring home to us life's strange contradictions. That is the kind of equality, sameness, or balance, of which the *Bhagavad Gita* speaks as the essence of Yoga. We have to observe in ourselves our reactions to the dualities which cause attraction and repulsion, if we are to free ourselves from their unbalancing effects.

Are we interested in service or self-development? This, again, is another question which really ought not to arise, because we should perceive the one as a form of action and the other as its effect on oneself. We should understand the whole process of our growth and flowering in terms of giving what is of value in ourselves and needed by those with whom we are brought into contact. Such an equal view upon the apparently different processes of life removes all antitheses.

It is only when we are aware in ourselves not only of the forces that operate openly on the surface but also of the subtle motives, the insinuated ends, that we can rise above the opposites which are the parents of conflict and produce the divided mind.

It has been said that doubt is a disqualification. "Doubt," in this sense, does not mean disbelief in some authority or proclamation. Doubt arises when there is a dilemma caused by divided reactions between which we are unable to discriminate.

A state of undividedness, in which we can find a sure way, is one of inner equilibrium in which there are no shifts and tiltings. If we

can respond to each circumstance, not with the different parts of our nature but with the entire being, we will know immediately the direction in which it inwardly gravitates, and that is the direction of a perfectly balanced and complete action. The word "complete" signifies the quality of a pure intuition. In difficult circumstances, where there is a discord of considerations and confusion in the act of weighing and balancing them, the way to determine the best course of action is not through calculation, not through such weighing and balancing, but through that centre of gravity within ourselves which will move us along the line of the right and perfect action. It is the moving thread of Ariadne in Greek mythology. A true judgment is an instantaneous judgment, which sums up perfectly, even if that judgment springs out of the churnings of much previous thought. Its pivot is that inner centre where true wisdom resides.

In any situation in which we do not quite know where our duty lies, what we should do, clarity of motive is what is most important. If there is the right orientation as regards the fundamental elements of the problem, it will indicate to us the immediate step to be taken.

The release of that something is the consummation, "the far-off, divine event," towards which we are all unconsciously though falteringly and even deviously moving.

Our great task is to discover this something in terms of our own experience. It cannot be by a mere word or phrase. It is in the process of life that the discovery must be made. For life is action and manifestation is life. Without action there can be no realization. It is the re-action within ourselves resulting from right action which produces realization. A truth which does not emerge in life is truth which is devoid of power. It is only when it flows into the form of its appropriate expression that it is made manifest in that consciousness which is our externalized self.

There is in each one something of supreme value, which is capable of an infinite development, which lasts for eternity, and it can be discovered in every incident, every circumstance of life. When a person has discovered it and identified his heart with it, he has established both integrity and equilibrium in himself ; he then lives not as a shadow of his plenary self confined within the prison-house of his limitations, but as

a radiant centre whose beams fall on every circumstance and are reflected back from every angle. In that light all things are seen in their true nature and reveal their hidden selves. He is then able to perceive both without and within himself that all things are one in their innermost essence.

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## VI

### THE LAW OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

SINCE there is, in truth, only the One, and everything has come from that One, everything must be related to every other thing. This relationship is but an underlying pattern, a foundation, as it were, on which we have to build. And all evolution is that building. It is a truism that all relationships are in the field of the relative, not the absolute.

It is only as we begin to glimpse the Light that shines from above, that we begin to realize that all is life, all is law, and all is relation in Nature.

Our relations are constantly changing, not only from life to life, but even within the field of a single life-time. A man's relationship with his son as a baby is not the same as the relationship when the son has grown to man's estate. Nor is his relationship with his sweetheart or

honeymoon companion the same as his relationship with the wedded partner of thirty or forty years' standing.

If each one thinks of himself as he stands, he can see he is related on every side of him. He is a unit in a web of relationships, an intersection point of innumerable connecting lines. He is a point on a sphere, round which and through which run an infinity of circles. The circles round the point may be regarded as circles of environment ; the circles through the point as the circles of life or consciousness-relationship.

Let us consider these latter lines. Some are vivified, some are not. The culmination of the evolutionary process is the galvanization of each of those lines.

It is an interesting metaphysical question : Are the lines radiations from the point, or is the point a point of unity for the lines ? In other words, is individuality the creation of forces, or are the forces the raying-out of the individuality ? Is the Logos a centre for the Light of the Logos, or the Light the enlargement of the Logos ?

Our relations are outer and inner, because the universe is outer and inner. The outer relations are relations of Karma, the law of



inter-action ; the inner relations are relations of affinity, of Spirit, of Rays, sub-Rays, sub-sub-Rays, and so on. As the outer and the inner come nearer to each other, as Heaven and Earth become united, as the conjunction of Spirit and Matter takes place—they are now in opposition—all things will be re-grouped. The re-grouping is a process in time.

The outer relations are of time, place and circumstances. Between the relations of matter and the relations of Spirit, are those relations we experience from moment to moment, that is, the relations or reactions of our consciousness. It is with this we are particularly concerned, for that which is of the Spirit—the pure Reality—is beyond us for the moment. And that which is born of matter, the past karma, we have to take as it comes.

Our relations are to persons, as well as to things, and relationship is on all three planes of thought, emotion and physical action. All our institutions are but a certain stabilization of relationships, laying the pattern for outer action, determining its nature within certain bounds. The outer is bound to follow the inner, even as the bark conforms to the outlines of the living

tree. For instance, if there is an inner feeling of equality with others, there will not be inequality for long in the outer conditions.

How are we related to others in our thought and feeling? How do we respond inwardly to their presence? How do we act on them with our unspoken thoughts and purposes? These will embody themselves in outer conduct.

The outer world is a world of conflicts, especially at present. The conflicts are fundamentally conflicts of opposites: East and West, capital and labor, colored and white, the ideas of youth and age, new and old, man and woman, and so on. In any relation of opposites, the first phase is indifference, due to lack of contact, inner or outer. The next is a form of contact resulting in a tension, which leads to the prevailing of the one over the other, domination by the one, suppression and exploitation of the other. This gives rise first to discontent on the part of the suppressed, then to resistance and rebellion, and finally to a complete disruption of the old relationships. There can be yet further conflict, but now more as between equals, with patched-up truces, compromises and uncertainty. Eventually all this has to reach a balance, a relationship of

harmony and co-operation with willingness of spirit, each party free.

We see this drama of conflict in racial and state relations, those of Britain and India for example ; also in the relations of capital and labor. In these latter relationships we are in the stage of truces and compromise. We see the conflict also in the relation between man and woman, although here the process is very subtle. Woman is no longer a chattel, but she is not yet as free as some think. She is not free in many eastern countries, nor in participation in and management of national and world affairs.

Every new idea exhibits similar variations in the treatment it undergoes. It is first treated with indifference ; then, if it is important enough to disturb conditions based on the old, scoffed at, persecuted, and at length, as the new idea prevails—and it must if it is a truth—accepted and even prided upon. Even a tyrant is accepted when he is victorious and then wins popular support. The scientific ideas of Copernicus, the freedom of subject peoples, and religious toleration are outstanding historical instances of a complete change in the general attitude.

There is an element of the opposite in any two individuals, for no two persons are wholly alike. The difference asserts itself in situations as they arise, and in the presence of third parties—whether persons or things—as they come into the field. We have all heard of the triangle in marital and (so-called) love relations. Any two individualities are opposites within a certain angle.

All opposites are really complementaries. They are causes of conflict in so far as the consciousness identifies itself with the outer form, and thus becomes subservient to it. The forms are different, but they need not divide. However, they do, while yet the consciousness is childlike (that is, ignorant) and gullible. The antithesis of self and other arises subtly and builds itself up through rehearsal in innumerable forms.

It is a habit of thought, due to an outward-turned consciousness. The externalization of the consciousnesses participating in the unity has to be bridged by vibrations. But in this outer world the vibrations are varied and discordant. Our problem is a problem of vibrations. These vibrations are at different rates, thus at different levels. One broad division amongst them

is that to which we refer in Theosophy as the Ego (the Spiritual Soul) and the personality. The Ego's response is always a harmony. The Devas conversing in sound on the levels of pure and ideal creation converse in music ; their exchanges in color are patterns of harmony.

All relations change, because relations are a life-process, life is change, continuous action and response. When a form ceases to respond, it is dead. The changes are due to Karma, the ties of which must all dissolve ; they are also initiated by volition. Karma is a law of balance, of action and re-action, a mechanical law, but in the sphere of responsible action and sentient effects, it becomes a law of morality. We see the changes due to Karma in the relationships of successive lives. Even considering only one life-period there is a continuous change. If the relations are superficial, the changes lead to breaks. Quick changes may lead to varied contacts, but they do not conduce to depth of understanding. Our difficulties with others are largely due to lack of depth, lack of inner contact, lack of a complete relationship. Each one is enclosed within himself, in a cocoon of his own thoughts, woven in a deceptive

light. There is a rind or crust of selfishness and a play of false lights around it.

If our lives are stagnant, it is because there is no flow of interest to others, no true communion with the life around us ; we are each within an enclosure of self, cut off, lonely, waveless, turning into a hard shell or crust. Our relations with others are so largely without life, they are relations of form, of isolation and conflict, disturbed and partial in their inter-actions.

In any true relation there has to be a certain realization : first of the dignity of the other person, his equality in dignity with ourselves, in true estate ; secondly of the difference from ourselves, which calls for understanding and sympathy.

In every outer relationship there is a difference of levels—social, intellectual, in experience, in organizational functioning (executive and worker) and so on. Every such difference produces its own slant in the relation of the parties concerned, and the activities arising from that relation. The display of the appropriate inner soul-quality in those activities is the purpose of that relationship. Thus arose the virtues of feudalism, as well as of family.

All natural differences tend to fall under certain types, which are specializations. Each of these has its own value. The male body gives certain experiences complementary to those of a woman. Each temperament (due to the varying mixture of Ray qualities) has its own charm, its special qualities. Each race, each religion, each culture gives the soul a bath in a certain type of influence needed to draw out its all-roundness. Each season of life has its purpose. In any scientifically devised scheme of life each will have due consideration, the help it needs, the opportunity to give of its special quality.

Right relationship must allow each difference to flame into its appropriate brilliance. In a relative order, the best place for each individual is the place of his greatest usefulness and significance, just as each note in a musical masterpiece is placed where, in relation to others, it has the most telling effect. The most effective relationship, where all the lengths and angles are different, is that which can be indicated by a perfect curve—a curve of perfect beauty. The Indian society of old was based on an acceptance of natural differences and aimed at the

calling for an inner comprehension of one's place and functions, as well as the outer laws determining them. All this was comprised in the word *Dharma*, also translated as morality. Relationship was for service, leading to progress—out of the limitations created by past actions and to a sphere of higher duties and larger responsibilities, duties as well as rights being recognized as having their place in every relationship.

The law of relationship, like the law of the pendulum, tends ever to the restoration of Nature's upset balance. There is the impact from without and the response. The response may be either wise and considered; or it may be, as it is in most cases, with an automatic re-active mind. It may be dull and insufficient (*Tâmasic*), or excited and excessive (*Râjasic*), or harmonious, intelligent and complete (*Sâttvic*). In the last case, the action will tend to dissipate the old reaction, and bring the scales to a proper balance. Such action is right action, resulting in right relationship.

Brotherhood is the only right relationship, because we are all sharers of one Life. Our



the animals, the criminals, and various invisible lives. Our present relationship with the animals is obviously all awry. It must inevitably be redressed in some manner by our paying for our present exploitation of them and the cruelties we inflict. No doubt we are tender to our pets, because our sense of possession helps along the feeling of affection for them. In ancient India, especially among the Jains and the Buddhists, *Ahimsa* or non-injury to all living things was held up as a supreme ideal, though it is not one easy of attainment. *Ahimsa* may seem a negative virtue, but every negation of a wrong or falsehood automatically releases a positive realization.

Unity and difference are both summed up in Brotherhood, which is a concrete and comprehensive relationship. Brotherhood recognizes differences, as in a family, but does not ever forget the unity. It is in fact an externalization of the unity. Brotherhood is the key to the solution of all our problems ; it is a pure relation, for there is in it no possessiveness. Possession is for gratification and leads to conflict. Any relation which uses another for one's own gratification is essentially a false relationship,

disguised, though it often is, by a simulation of love. Such love is merely that liking which arises from enjoyment. This is not to say that enjoyment is bad in itself. It can be pure, the experience of a harmony ; or it may be egotistical, a predicate that has always the single subject of "self". It is the desire for sensation which glours thought, makes it regard the false as the true, subjects Manas to the modifications of the astral principle, *Kâma Rûpa*. The illusion spreads through association to other things, as we see in the art that plays up the sex appeal. Brotherhood excludes the idea of using another with the ulterior aim of a benefit for oneself or exploiting the other ; it implies justice, co-operation and freedom.

The true, constructive and happy relationship is essentially a relationship of freedom. Such a relationship allows the individual to be more truly himself, or at least helps him to be less conditioned. There can be a communion of hearts only in a state of harmony, of synchronizing vibrations and enriching inter-action, with no possibility in it of discord, parasitism or domination. The relation of a liberated man to all beings and things is a free relationship. H

does not become attached ; he incurs no debts. He is free of Karma and his progress is by the law of the Spirit, the law of joyous sacrifice, which is giving. He has purged his consciousness of all elements in the sub-conscious, which extends like an accordion into section after section of the past. He is unconditioned and not self-enclosed. He has freed the present from the past. He is the true yogi, who is a centre of pulsating life, no longer deadened or inert. He is vibrant like a wonderful drum, and all things round him vibrate in consonance with him. He is one with all of them in the movements of his consciousness. His is a universal relation.

Depth in relationship belongs to the immortal Ego, who is eternally pure and non-egoistic. He is the selfless Self. His relationship with other such Egos is a purely spiritual relationship. What is spiritual is ever beyond the reach of Time's defacing hands. In this wonderful universe in which we live and move, uncomprehending for the most part, what is worthy of immortality is alone immortal. The true man is immortal, because he is the spiritual man and partakes of the divine qualities of the Spirit. His humanity is a reflection of his divinity and

is undecaying, because self-renewing. He is a perpetual youth, because in him is a fountain of creative life.

True love belongs to the divine Ego and is immortal, because love which is pure is the perfect as well as the most dynamic relationship, from the standpoint of the inner vision. Thus, any peak of affection, love, or any other form of spiritual exaltation, once touched, is registered and retained for ever. There is "no lost good". It is a case of "eternity affirming the conception of an hour," or more strictly, a passing yet perfect moment of time. For each moment is a vanishing point which, as it is permitted to rise and fall without being appropriated either by the background of the past or by a reflection from the past, an anticipated future, blossoms into eternity.

What can we do, from where we are, to reach that stage? We have to examine ourselves constantly to see how far we are right, where we go wrong; examine ourselves in all our relations to persons and things. What is right in relationships? In relation to things, there must be non-appropriation of what does not rightfully belong to one; in relation to

living beings, non-injury as the basis ; and in addition, avoidance of promiscuous or soiling contacts, a truthfulness in action, and the highest, the purest and the most self-sacrificing love.

We can never have right relationship with others until our thoughts of others express that relationship. Relationship rests on a fundamental attitude, and that attitude is the principal determinant of thought, not the incident which gives provocation to the thought. The attitude is like a string ; the thoughts are its vibrations, as it is struck by incidents. With everyone and everything there is a relationship which conduces to true progress in accordance with the Divine Will. It must comprise harmony, balance, a happy reaction, which increases the significance of each to the other, a sensitive approach, and the contact of soul with soul, producing a spark which sets each soul on fire. Right relationship is the embodiment of a timeless Reality in an identifiable form. It is on all planes—thought, feeling and action. To be perfectly related with all is to be perfect.

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## VII

### THEOSOPHY, A COMPREHENSIVE SYNTHESIS

THEOSOPHY, as the word indicates, is the Divine Wisdom, and we can have any conception of that Wisdom only in so far as it comes within our purview. For our purposes, then, it may be defined as the Wisdom declared in all things, a Wisdom which must have a relation to the things we observe, to our practical experience.

In any concept we may form of God as the Reality, or of man and the universe, as related to Him, we cannot go contrary to facts, that is, our experiences, whatever may be the explanation of those experiences. The observations of Science are among such undeniable facts ; but not any inferences from them, of which there are many, nor any of the theories which change from time to time, and must change further as something more of that is known.

Science leaves out, enters its field. Science itself in its progress has come across several such X's. The inferences and theories have to be judged on their merits, and each one of us must feel free to judge them. It may be that a certain scientific theory gears in with the occult view at some points, or is even essentially identical with that view, though couched in other terms. The word "occult" sounds mysterious, but means only "the hidden," and what is hidden in Nature from our limited view and perception is vastly more than what is open and patent on the surface.

Science, in the modern sense, has grown out of and is based on observations. But that which is observed is only an appearance, a form. There is behind the front or facade of that form a depth of causative factors, and indeed it is the attempt to know something of these factors and their creations at different levels which gives rise to what is called Occultism.

There is something which transcends the forms we can observe on any plane of matter, and that is the nature of life or consciousness, the subjective side, which is as much the study of Occultism as the objective. When life or

consciousness manifests through a form in some kind of observable activity, then Science can take hold of such activities, and speak of that life or consciousness in terms of those activities. But the scientific view is limited by the fact that there are definite limits to the faculties of physical observation exercised by man. We cognize the external world only by certain definite sections in a scale of vibrations which extends on either side far beyond our present normal range. Theoretically, this extension can be endless. There may be a wave in some unknown medium corresponding to any length we may postulate, for aught we know.

If such be the case, is it not possible that what we regard as a person's subjective experiences, his mystical or religious feelings, for example, have also an objective side, but their objective aspect is at a subtler and higher level than the vibrations which affect our normal senses ?

Science builds from below. The occult edifice includes the expansive heavens, life and earth. But the foundation for the whole structure must consist of objective data, foundation in the sense not of a beginning, but of what is real to *all* of



us, namely, the objective facts. The structure may have its origination at the top, the apex of the crown of the central dome. In other words, it may be a structure which hangs from a point at the top, a very remarkable stalactite. This sounds absurd to us, does it not ? It is as absurd as the idea that people on the other side of this globe are hanging with their heads down and feet up. Above and below are relative terms which must be understood as within and without, the unified and the differentiated. If in this view of a movement from the centre to the circumference we introduce the conception of decreasing spirituality and increasing materiality, we get the truth as seen by Occultism. If what we call a structure is a movement or flow from above downwards, its downmost ends must fit into the data set up like ninepins or a thousand pins at this, to us, rock-bottom level. The Occult Philosophy or Science attempts to convey the facts, explains logically to a nicety all that is, all that we can observe, all the phenomena, natural and human.

The foundation is right only when the data are complete : then the walls can be

logical inferences, up to a point, and get some idea, if not of the various floors in the Father's house (to use a Christian term) and its roof or the shape of the roof, at least a unified concept of the span of the roof. In that way we get a diagrammatic and necessarily outline-idea of the edifice, which may not be incorrect, so far as it goes. Any scientific statement broad enough to define a whole field of facts tends to become abstract—geometrical, equational and so on—and lack the content of life, living experience and consciousness.

The Divine Wisdom must include everything seen and unseen, everything of life and form, subjective and objective to man. Suppose we have a knowledge of all this, in some degree ; will that knowledge make a complete whole, a synthesis ? There can be a synthesis in the field of knowledge only if there is a certain coherence or harmony in that which is known, namely, the universe. Things are held together in a certain way even now, under the stress of forces which act according to certain laws. We can have a knowledge of this condition, an analysis of its parts. But is there a principle in the universe, which makes for a greater, profounder and more

fundamental harmony, which will produce an eventual union of all parts, bring them into a certain order which may be described as a true and complete synthesis possessing the highest significance ?

Theosophy, which is a modern version of the ancient Wisdom with regard to these things, answers this question in the affirmative. Einstein, before he came to his theories, was motivated by the feeling that Nature must be a whole, and there must be both harmony and a certain uniformity in her workings. This was faith, and it guided him to a standpoint which has yielded very remarkable results. Whether his views are susceptible to further radical modifications or not, the faith is fully shared by the Theosophist. The Theosophical explanation has the merit of viewing all that takes place in the light of principles which, starting from the highest point of self-realization and being deductively sound, exhibit the highest harmony and produce an outline which does not exclude any observed or experienced fact. These principles together make a logical whole and are a kind of unbreakable metaphysical atom. But it is an atom

of his own conscious realizations, and then the atom will expand into a very wonderful universe.

There is a principle of Unity in the universe, which is the unity of all life. All that is manifested arises out of a certain polarity between this principle of Unity and the principle of Differentiation, represented by Matter in all its grades. Other words for this polarity are Spirit and Matter, which are inseparable at all levels and in all forms. It is only the manifestation of the Spirit which varies, in degree and in quality or nature. And it is this fundamental supposition which distinguishes Theosophy from all material and purely empirical philosophies. Because of this supposition, Theosophy may be described as a spiritual philosophy.

There is life everywhere, though it exists in different grades, even in what we regard as dead and inert matter. Consciousness is inherent in life. In man that consciousness has developed into self-consciousness, and because of this development he can know certain truths pertaining to his psychic and spiritual nature, truths which are subjective to his physical consciousness. That is, he can delve into his consciousness and discover the true nature of himself.

The most important of these truths is the unity of all existence. In the fact of this unity, which is dynamic, lies the possibility of a perfect synthesis. All things are evolving into a state in which their soul—their true nature or life-nature—will become more apparent, a state of greater awareness, pliability, and capacity for self-harmonization. When that process is complete, they will all have fallen into their proper order, an order which will make for mutual co-operation and greater solidarity, without any of the things sacrificing its own distinctive spiritual quality.

As each thing thus evolves, it becomes more capable and falls into its true, that is to say, the best possible relations with others. We can realize this possibility among mankind. In a special sense, all men are one. Given the necessary intelligence and a spirit of mutual understanding, it is possible for individuals, groups, and nations, different as they are, to co-operate with one another, with the effect of greatly enriching one another's life and making a splendid human whole.

Theosophy extends this conception to the entire universe. The universe is animated by

the same Life, which is God's Life, though in man there is a much higher degree of unfoldment than in the lesser kingdoms. There is a unity of Spirit. This Spirit, reflected in matter, manifests a manifold aspect. Each aspect is a distinct individuality which in each case manifests in a certain form. Nothing can show itself without a form.

The Spirit is transcendent and ever intangible at all objective levels. It sends out infinite rays which constitute the soul of every form, though one form differs from another in capacity and nature. The manifestation of the individuality, which is the nature of the indwelling life, is not static but progressive. This is evolution, which as Science sees, is an evolution of species ; which as Theosophy sees, is an evolution of form which matches the unfoldment of life.

The indwelling Life is one and many : one from the standpoint of the Spirit which is the centre ; many and different from the standpoint of Matter or expression, which represents the circumference.

The synthesis of which I speak is not merely a synthesis in our knowledge which gives us a better comprehension, but a synthesis in Nature

herself. If we think of the life within things, the possibility is there not merely of a synthesis which is a union, but even of an integration, which is more than union and implies a unity. Since the One has become the many, the many can re-become the One in a realized consciousness. But on the side of individualities, which are distinct, synthesis must mean perfect harmony, giving rise to sympathy, co-operation, and happiness.

This being the Theosophical view, it can take in whatever is true in any philosophy, any religion, any science. These, particularly Religion and Science, have seemed to be opposed to one another in the past, but they merely represent different angles of approach. Science approaches each thing in the universe from outside, and records its observations. It further establishes the relations in what is observed. It also propounds theories to explain those facts, such as the theory of Relativity. Philosophy works on the plane of the mind, taking all mental experiences into account; examines the validity of these experiences, draws conclusions therefrom, and seeks to arrange these in a certain order, so as to

illuminate the natural processes. Religion is concerned with certain types of these experiences, the deeper ones, and formulates theories or ideas to explain them. Since there is nothing outside our experience to build upon, and all experience is ground for study, in Theosophy we study Science, Philosophy and Religion.

Wisdom is much more than knowledge, which is ordinarily only the knowing of facts and processes. Our wisdom consists in what we make of those facts and processes. Wisdom lies not in mere ingenuity, even on God's part. There is nothing more wonderful than the ingenuity of Nature. But all to what end? There is a deep purpose in Nature, which is the self-unfoldment of all things, of the hidden nature in them. In this unfoldment there is joy, there is creation, there is beauty.

The Wisdom of God is in His nature which is manifested throughout the universe and is not separate from it. It is that Wisdom which has produced the many forms with the impulse of the one Life. The forms become more and more meaningful, as they become charged with the power of the unity. More of meaning, more of power, more of individuality, means a truer



and closer integration of the elements that compose that form. The final Wisdom of God is in the synthesis that results of all evolving forms—a certain order in them which is a perfect order.

From the standpoint of this Wisdom, the construction of the whole universe, its nature, can be expressed in extremely simple terms. Since everything is logical and proceeds in a natural sequence, everything is simple at the centre. It is complicated on the circumference. First, Spirit and Matter, the two manifested poles of the one absolute Reality, all life a play of the Spirit on Matter or inter-action between them. Imagine the Spirit as the centre, and the dense, physical matter as the circumference. Matter exists in different grades of fineness and subtlety on the radii connecting the centre with the circumference. Thus there is in the universe matter of different grades and types, and there are forms of each type of matter constituting different worlds. All these worlds are related sections, as it were, of one world.

Evolution is endless, for there is no limit to the potentiality of the Spirit which is being increasingly realized in the forms. Each in-

represents a continuing manifestation of the one Spirit, a manifestation which continues even after the death of the physical body, because the Spirit is immortal. There must be in the universe, and there are, Beings inhabiting mostly the subtler worlds, in whom that unfoldment, which is everywhere taking place, has reached a higher stage, and who are therefore God-like in Power, Wisdom and Love. Man is destined to grow likewise. All this, though seemingly theoretical, follows extremely logically from simple premises, answers innumerable questions, and has much rational ground to support it.

Our knowledge of the Divine Wisdom must be necessarily extremely partial and limited. Our horizon, from any eminence we can command, must be a tiny segment of an infinite sphere. Yet the view we obtain is a comprehensive view. At least, it makes a rounded outline. That outline has been given the name of Theosophy, and into it we can paint whatever knowledge comes to us. It puts all our knowledge into a certain order, giving us an ever fuller idea of the meaning of the processes in which we are involved. This comprehension

has to be of both life and form. For life is the synthesizing agent. And knowledge of life can come only through awareness of others, a sensitive, sympathetic and imaginative understanding of them, and a certain freedom from bondage to one's limited and separated self.

It is possible to have a certain knowledge of the whole, without a knowledge of the parts, to have some knowledge of life, without much study of the form. But more of what is in the unity is known as it is deployed in action, as it is objectified in form. The perfect form is that form through which the innate nature of a thing is fully revealed. It is towards such a form, perfect in all ways, that man and all things in Nature and the universe as a whole are steadily moving.

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## VIII

### IMAGINATION AND REALITY

IMAGINATION is a faculty that reaches above and beyond the levels of observation and reasoning, *par excellence* the faculty which builds bridges in the mental world and even in the physical. It is, in truth, a God-like power, for it creates in the mind things which can afterwards be materialized in one form or another. We observe with the senses, though that activity is not purely sensuous, since the mind enters into every single observation. When we look at a surface, say at the walls of a building, and form an image or picture in three dimensions, that image is constructed out of the elements of the impressions we receive from that surface. There are the impressions of line, color, height, breadth, texture, and so on, which are photographed first on our vision and then in our brain, but the whole perspective is given by the mind. Thus,

there is the use of the imagination in the very observation of things ; otherwise, we should get nothing more than unrelated fragments of impressions.

Imagination is not identical in all its aspects with visualization. The latter is akin to a proper focussing ; when we are able to focus rightly, we can produce a perfectly clear picture, as every photographer knows. But imagination includes the capture of higher, more subtle ideas which seem to underlie or invisibly preside over the perceived foreground, and their materialization. It is with imagination that we penetrate into the borderland between the known and the unknown ; not the heart of the unknown, or all its vast stretches, but its near horizon, wherein the things that are there are as yet but dim shapes or spirits half-sensed, but presently to be revealed to us in the naked light of objectivity. We sense something which seems to manifest before our vision, assuming objective shape. It is with the imagination that we perceive a background, at first unsensed, and shades of difference which bring into view new figures and outlines. Imagination is required

situated processes and see in them reflections of a common invisible relationship. Also, it is by imagination that we can apprehend to any extent the inward nature of a thing, guided to it by its outer signs and manifestations.

If we consider the process of reasoning, all reasoning, all thinking, is the making explicit of relationships that are implicit in the various observed things or facts, but it is with imagination that we build an edifice, construct a whole out of different parts. The very word "imagination" implies the creation of images. All thought moves through images. Even if we think of an abstraction, a mathematical symbol, for instance, it also assumes some form or figure in our minds. Thus, imagination may be said to be superior to reasoning, because it creates and does not merely register. To raise an edifice which will stand on the ground of facts it must go hand in hand with its more prosaic sister, the logical mind.

What, exactly, happens when we imagine? We imagine on the basis of impressions received, and these are concerned with the things we hear, see, touch, smell, taste and feel. Of course, fresh impressions are received constantly.

But when we try to create, we select some experiences and build them up by a re-arrangement of the elements of those experiences. The material is not new, that is, not original, but what we shape out of that material is new.

When we speak of the imagination as a special endowment, a noble attribute, we naturally think of the imagination and achievements of genius. It is the imagination which gives wings to the mind. Truly speaking, we create with both the imagination and the will. They are the two faculties by means of which the greatest achievements in every field are made possible ; they are the heavenly twins, like two splendid curves meeting in a beautiful cusp. In the realm of scientific discoveries, in all great and inspiring literature, in every form of art-creation, we can see imagination at work in an endless array of possible shades and expressions.

There is such a thing as the scientific imagination, and it has always played a large part in the achievement of new discoveries and inventions. An outstanding instance is the wireless and the radio. Before Marconi's invention of the wireless, it would have been most

startling to be told that there is something in space, whether ether or any other element, which will conduct waves around the globe, and that those waves can be transformed back and forth into sounds which can be heard over great distances. How did Marconi arrive at the conception of his invention? He must first have imagined the possibility of certain waves travelling through space, being acquainted with the phenomenon of waves, and then of one set of waves being transformed into another, having seen the similarity between one wave motion and another. He put together various elements of previous experience in a new order, so as to produce a new effect. The wireless became possible as the materialization of the form which was built up by his imagination, of course after diverse physical tests and incidentals.

Einstein's theory of Relativity is an outstanding instance of an imaginative hypothesis. Certain parts of it are not susceptible of acceptance on the basis of reasoning with our practical experience, for when he talks of curved space and a finite universe, he is advancing propositions which are totally unfamiliar to our experience. Nevertheless, his theory offers the best



way found by Science so far to explain and predict phenomena. It stands, because it has answered the numerous practical tests to which it has been put.

The nature of the imagination must be necessarily according to the nature of the person who imagines. Thus, there are many different kinds of imagination. The lunatic, for example, forms images of all sorts of phantastic things, which are the creations of a disordered and diseased imagination. A lover imagines, as we would say, or is able to perceive, a divine grace and beauty in the object of his love. Because of a heightened sensitiveness he sees what others cannot see, and even something which he himself possibly had not seen before or may not see later. A poet uses yet another type of imagination, infusing into external things all manner of human and often very wonderful feelings and reactions.

It can be justifiably argued that anything which we ourselves have not experienced, but have only imagined, is merely a projection from ourselves, that with a conditioned mind we project something to which we attribute an independent or objective existence. How far,

then, is our imagination a creation of reality, and how far is it merely self-projection ?

Is it possible, for instance, for a congenitally blind man to imagine the glorious colors of a sunset, however vividly and sympathetically those colors may be described to him ? He can only translate them into terms of touch or perhaps of fragrance, and hence the whole picture for him will be in strangely misleading terms. When something quite beyond our experience-range is presented or described to us, it is next to impossible to picture it as it is. Thus, it would seem impossible to imagine an entirely new fragrance, one which has never hitherto been smelt by us. One can imagine, of course, bits of various known fragrances as being mingled together, but it would not be a new fragrance, one not so far come across, which Nature may evolve or which may be produced synthetically by chemical processes. Obviously, the imagination has its definite limitations.

The limitation is evident with regard to any idea or thing which belongs to a plane beyond that of our normal vision or that in which our senses operate. All that pertains to the subjective side of Nature, as distinguished from the

objective, everything that is concerned with the consciousness of man, calls for a use of the imagination. If we want to know the relation of the seen to the unseen, if we desire to have even a fragmentary, twilight conception outside the very limited range in which the senses move, we must fall back on the image-making faculty. How could we be even dimly aware of the nature or processes of consciousness, say in a mineral, a plant, an animal, or even another human being, except by a sympathetic apprehension? Even then we cannot imagine what another person thinks or feels, outside what we ourselves have thought or experienced, either consciously or sub-consciously. We can follow the movements of an animal and, identifying ourselves in thought with that animal, imagine ourselves as making those movements and see how our own consciousness is affected by this imagination.

Suppose someone is trying to describe the nature of an experience he has had. How shall we understand that experience? We can only use an imagination based upon our own experience. Such an imagination may be inaccurate and halting as bringing an accurate understanding

of the other person's experience. But it is the only faculty we have for the purpose, though in using it we can make ourselves sensitive as a photographic plate to the description, as indeed we can to any object or person present before us, and thus reflect in ourselves the experience as related, or the person or thing, as the case may be. Normally, such an attempt would be described as an effort of the imagination. But then the image is a mirror of what is presented to the consciousness to know. The imagination is passive and not active.

Imagination has not only its limitations but also its definite dangers. With regard to the occult, that which is hidden in a purely subjective state, imagination can easily be mere wish-fulfilment. In that case it is a projection from what is in ourselves already, as in a dream state. Occultism does not mean carrying a load of pet fancies. Imagination can be flighty, erratic, unbalanced, and even diseased and morbid. We see such examples in many types of psychopathic people, in madmen who suffer from torturing delusions of their own creation. Even in ordinary life, when the personal element enters into some recollection, it affects the lines and

ades of the impression made by the events themselves, colors and exaggerates their different parts, and thus distorts and deforms the whole picture.

We need to recognize these dangers and limitations in order to realize that our ideas regarding the nature of consciousness on the higher planes, and whatever may be perceived through that consciousness, are bound to be exceedingly partial, even if they represent some truth.

It is always the case that a person's vision assumes the form of his particular conditioning. The religious experiences the form and the coloring, apart from the active contents of such experiences, are almost always drawn from elements of the faith and the legends which have moulded the thought of the experiencing person. When we speak of God, Nirvâna, the Âtman and so on, there are no words in which to describe these realities, not even the possibility of thoughts which will do any justice to them, and we are merely creating images according to our nature and capacity.

Man, when he thinks of God, creates an image in the likeness of himself. The God of a savage, for instance, is limited by the imagination

of a savage. Such limitations apply to everything which transcends our experience, be it God or even the fourth dimension. How many people can actually visualize the fourth dimension in their brain consciousness, although they may infer its existence by analogies? It is possible to reach the truth belonging to the finer planes of being, the higher realms of consciousness, only when the mind has been absolutely freed from every sort of conditioning, from every kind of prejudice and predilection.

In trying to picture the state called Nirvâna, we probably imagine a state of blessedness and peace, akin to something we have experienced, and then carry it conceptually, by a series of mental steps, to a higher power. We use words, like symbols in algebra, and carry them up to a certain point. The core of our thought is based on past experience, but it is rounded off with a number of words and symbols to indicate the general aspect of the concept or possibly only the direction which the concept represents. The Lord Buddha described Nirvâna as neither Being nor non-Being. What can we make of that statement, from our experiences? Thus it is with all those matters which are quite beyond us.

When people spoke to Him of these things, He is said to have remained silent. We formulate something which is a mere label or symbol of the Reality, and are content with the symbol.

Yet we have to recognize that we cannot abstain in our mental processes from the creation of images. It would be a most rigorous form of *Tapas* (a Samskrit word meaning a fiery and all-consuming effort) to deny oneself all thinking except the observation of what is. We cannot but look ahead in practical life in order to meet its problems and live intelligently. It would be foolish to stop the process of imaginative appreciation involved in music, literature and science. Should we then only in the understanding of man and Nature refuse to look beyond the immediate, thus restricting the actual to the immediate? Imagination does lift us to higher levels of thought, and thus inspire us to finer, nobler, more beautiful living. It is imagination which broadens the mind beyond its hard and fast enclosures, lifts it out of its grooves, and leads to those far horizons where we are greeted by a far different kind of light from the hard light of everyday experience.

We need imagination, and we need also safeguards from those dangers and excesses in which our past experiences, likes and dislikes, play havoc with our thought. We must hold what we imagine as lightly as the advanced scientist today holds every theory of his, and like him, be ready to put it to every practical test. It would be well not to be too certain and not to presume to close an acquaintance with truths and states of being that lie beyond our depths. Intensity of emotion and vividness may be to us an index of validity, but vividness depends not only on the intrinsic truth of the experience but also on one's personal reactions, which again depend upon one's conscious and unconscious desires, aims and expectations.

Objectivity is a scientific qualification, and is equally needed by the occult scientist. Purity of living ; accuracy of observation, steadiness in reasoning, and careful definition of thought ; precision in the use of language, and truth in all things, including behaviour ; the elimination of all partialities and prejudices ; self-control in every respect ; the impersonality or detachment which arises from breadth and universality of sympathy ; gracefulness and accuracy even in



physical actions—all these are needed by the man who in his free imagination would perceive only the Real. We have to make ourselves a living Stradivarius with perfect resonance and tone for the music of the Spirit.

In the ancient Pythagorean School, mathematics and music were two parts of a single discipline which was employed to impart universal truths. Thus was imagination of the beautiful, through the science-art of music, developed side by side with the rigorous logic of mathematics. Both these sciences have laws by which their development is governed. It has been said that an analysis of the universe and its construction will reveal mathematical thought. How sound, or vibration, in rhythmical, melodic and harmonious forms underlies the evolution of the universe has yet to be discovered. But the concept of sound or vibration being the basis of the universal architecture is implicit in the very term "Logos". Also in the School of Pythagoras, great stress was laid on simple, abstemious and beautiful living. It was essential that each student should live a pure, temperate, self-controlled life. Then he had to devote himself to a study of the

Divine Wisdom for its own sake and not as a means to any personal end. He was taught to approach the Wisdom through a mind which was beautifully modelled by the practice of mathematics and music.

The Divine Wisdom is Theosophy, and if God used imagination to create, we are also obliged to use it, in order to understand His Wisdom. We have to draw upon it for comprehending those things that belong to the art and poetry in creation. In Theosophy there is an attempt to make an outline—naturally in a very fragmentary form—of the universe, but the outline has to be filled in with our thought. There are descriptions which give us an idea of what perfection can mean to us, and thus enable us to build into an image of beauty the type of perfection that we ourselves can individually achieve. We have to stretch our consciousness to gain a glimpse of some of the glories of those higher worlds to which we do not as yet have access. All this cannot be wrong if it is seeking not a personal end, but the True the Good and the Beautiful, although we may err in discriminating the golden mean, the way of perfect balance, from both excess and defect

The question may be raised whether there is any value in descriptions of such things as are beyond our range, by some one who has experienced them. The answer to this must be in the affirmative, if they give us a vision of the whole of which our experiences are a part. For it is only in the light of the whole that we can perceive the significance of the part. The whole is revealed "as though in a glass, darkly," in order to enable us to deal with the part against which we come up, instead of leaving us in the eclipse of a total ignorance. Our consciousness moves but on a small arc of the full circle, and Theosophy reveals to us the nature of that circle and illumines a little of the extensions of the arc. Our impressions of those matters which are beyond our everyday range are bound to be sketchy, yet if we are wise and guarded they can represent a truth even in that sketchiness. They can serve as the basis for a picture which we will go on painting for a long time. Even if the basis gives us only a sense of the immense worth of the picture, it has its place in the process of our understanding.

Further, a description of a truth we have not yet realized can be a guide to an imagination

otherwise wandering in the wilderness, and thus help us to some idea of the direction we should take. Our imagination expands not merely through the increase of mental capacity—a capacity to remember past experiences and to know an increasing number of things which can be put together in new ways—but also through an increasing sensitiveness to all that surrounds us in the world in which we are. We are in a little corner of a boundless living cosmos, and very little even of that corner is actually open to our present experience. As for the rest which lies hidden in immeasurable depths, we may sense certain aspects of our immediate surroundings vaguely with our feelings, but they are an infinitesimal fragment of what it is possible to feel even with regard to them. Similarly, the ideas we have as to the nature of things in their endless diversity are as but treasure-dust from an infinite store-house.

If we compare a savage and a cultured man with respect to their sensitiveness, the difference is very much more than we might imagine. That difference is a matter of growth, which cannot be achieved in the span of a single life, a growth in richness of ideas and feelings.

with regard to all sorts of things. There is a continuous increase of sensitivity in the process of evolution, which we can greatly hasten, and with it a flood of new experience, both in volume and variety. Each individual unwinds, as it were, from the subjective portion of himself an increasingly sensitive tape, on which all external things are registered in the form of perceptions and feelings. As more and more of this tape is let down into the physical consciousness, there is fresh and ever greater capacity for registering the vibrations which come from the external world, and a translation of those vibrations into forms of subjective experience not previously had.

There is another reason why a description of what is on the other side can be of value to our limited physical consciousness. What we know in the finer parts of ourselves, and we do know certain things there, can, by a magnetic pull from this side, the creation of a gravitation, surmount the obstacles to such knowledge reaching the physical consciousness. When we come upon a truth down here, touching the spiritual consciousness, it is but remembrance or recognition of a truth we have known elsewhere and at closer range.

All attempts to imagine those things which are beyond our present experience obviously stretch our capacity to know. Our feelings, our experiences and our impressions, every mode in which we perceive, the manner in which the external world affects us, all these grow continuously, and as we thus gather better and more material, our ideas and ideals grow correspondingly in beauty and power of truth.

Where do we find the material for any ideal concept? In our experience, of course. Let us take as an example the geometrical figures, a point and a straight line. Now, there is no such thing anywhere as a point without length, breadth, height or depth, nor is there actually such a thing as a straight line. These are merely ideal concepts, based upon such line and such point as we know. The actualities are crude, but from the things which we perceive we abstract the quality of the line and the point and then carry that concept to the greatest possible degree of refinement. By means of our imagination we picture, though vaguely, a point somewhere, and we call it the geometrical point and the geometrical straight line. These ideal concepts are the very foundation

mathematics, which has demonstrated its value in all the developments of modern Science and its inventions, the miracles it has achieved. All of Science rests on mathematical data.

In Occultism, which is a knowledge of the universe, comprehending the nature of life and consciousness as well as of matter, we are concerned not only with measures and quantities but also with states and qualities. But as some of these qualities are manifested in gradations, we proceed here too by steps in our imagination up to the limit with which we identify a certain definite state.

The ideal is always a creation of the imagination. At first it must be created out of such material as there is, collected by the higher and more sensitive part of one's Intelligence. Out of this material is built up an ideal which is attractive to contemplate. Gradually the ideal increases in beauty and power as the material of which it is built becomes richer, more delicate, and of better quality. When we think of a Perfect Man—be it the Christ or any other Great One—the image which we make is more beautiful, more dignified, serene and inspiring as we are able

Just as ultimate and limiting conceptions form the foundation for mathematics, so we need ideal concepts of morality to form the foundation for building a perfect ethical system. Our ideals of beauty, virtue and goodness are the foundation of whatever genuine (as contrasted with "conventional") morality we may possess. Goodness is of the essence of morality ; beauty is of the essence of art ; and it is on such ideal conceptions of goodness and beauty that we base our knowledge of true art and true morality. When we create an ideal and invest it with the highest qualities which we have felt or experienced in the most sensitive part of our consciousness, we are actually recognizing their value and increasing our sensitiveness to them. As we contemplate ideals of purity, serenity, beauty, virtue, goodness and so on, and give our whole attention to them, we experience the nature of those qualities in a fuller measure.

It goes without saying that any conception of such an abstract reality as one's higher Self is colored very largely by the nature of one's imagination, hence by the nature of oneself. We can have no possible conception of the spiritual Ego other than our conception of its



qualities. When we think of that Ego, we have to think not of a shape, a feature, a peculiarity, but of the qualities that must belong to the nature and consciousness of the Ego. The higher Self can only be "felt," if it is the spiritual Self, and any imagination devoid of such feeling cannot give us the reality of it. A man who has not felt something of the quality of beauty will not be able to have any idea of beauty. A man who in all his life has never felt a particle of sympathy or kindness towards anybody, would not be able to form any idea of those qualities if we were to talk to him about them. Hence, if our ideas of things are to correspond in any degree to the reality, they have to have a little of the quality of that reality, and that little must be a matter of experience. Thus, the effectiveness, power and value of our imagination depends on the quality which we are able to impart to any act of imagination.

When it comes to a concept of the highest Self—the Monad—it is only through the utmost refinement of the imagination that we can hope to gain even the vaguest idea of the qualities which belong to it. The Monad is indivisible, an ultimate, just as the straight line or the point

is an ultimate which cannot be further refined or idealized. We cannot go beyond that simplicity and absoluteness which is the Monad, but we can have some dim and distant idea of it, when we are pure enough to reflect it in ourselves, because it is a part of ourselves, ourselves in deepest reality. We can at least send the rays of our intelligence and imagination in the direction, dark as it may be, in which it exists. If we cannot touch the reality itself, we can with the arrow of our imagination hit a mark which indicates the direction of that highest point.

Imagination should operate less on the basis of past experience, than by the guidance of another faculty with which it should be blended in the process of abstracting the qualities, the essence, with which we create our ideal concepts. We may look at a picture, analyze it in all its parts, and feel and say that it is beautiful. But with what have we perceived the beauty? That evaluation is not based on any kind of reasoning, but comes from something subtler than the mind, a higher and hidden source. When we look at or touch an object, we get a certain sensation or "feel," quite different from the "feel" or magnetism appertaining to

any other object. The thing cannot really be felt with an imagination which can work only on the basis of past experiences, nor can it be felt with reason, nor observed with any other faculty of the mind. The quality, nature, life, essence of a thing—be it a metal, a tree, a grain of wood, a painting, an animal, a human being—can only be felt subjectively with that higher faculty, which we can only call Intuition, a form of direct knowledge.

I spoke of trying to imagine an entirely new fragrance. Equally, how does it become possible to imagine an entirely new melody, not one akin to or a modification of known melodies, but something that produces an entirely new effect? It is possible, through the faculty of Intuition or Buddhi, to create things which are entirely new, for when the faculty is developed it creates centres in the consciousness from which there emerge ideas that are new and true, and because they are true, also beautiful. Intuition actually plays a much larger role in the apprehensions of our consciousness, than is generally supposed. It is a faculty which we have yet to develop, and therefore we have little idea of its full scope and possibilities, being still

only in the stage of mental development. But even now, and more than we are aware, there is an infiltration into the mind of ideas from the intuitional or Buddhic consciousness.

It has been said that the nature of the Self is knowledge. To be, to know, and to rejoice are the three aspects of the Divine Spirit or Self, according to Indian philosophy. That faculty which we call Buddhi is in its very nature knowledge, so that its every activity expresses a hidden truth. What it apprehends is the essence, the "thatness" of things, and not merely what they appear or seem to be. When the mind is perfectly still and ceases to make images which are but prejudice, distortion or preconception, when it has become a perfect mirror, neither convex nor concave, it will be able to reflect that truth which is the very nature of the Spirit. It will be able to create, move and function in the light of that truth.

We can train our consciousness to that point where its every move, every single construction on its part, is an illustration of beauty, and perfect beauty is always a revelation of Truth. Just as every curve in space follows a mathematical equation or law, so too does every movement

of beauty embody a law which is the formula, the character, of its being. The beauty consists in its law-fulness. Hence, before our imagination can move spontaneously in ways of truth and beauty, it must be an imagination which moves according to a law not imposed from without, but inherent in itself ; it must be not an imagination operated by past conditioning but an imagination that is a law unto itself, in the sense that in its very nature there is operating a secret law, which is the wisdom of God.

When there is no distortion, no falsehood in the nature of a person, then surely there can be no falsehood in his imagination and what it conceives of its own free motion. Anything which is subject to compulsion is corrupted and no longer pure. Thus, a pure nature has to be an inherently free nature, that is, unconditioned ; then every mode of functioning of that nature must result in an expression of Truth.

What we can do with the imagination depends much upon its training. Our educational institutions need to include in their curricula the scientific training of the child's imagination without giving it any bias except in the direction of truth and beauty. So far, the development and

training of the imagination has not been regarded as an educational art, except perhaps among artists. Part of the training we need is the freeing of ourselves from all kinds of distortions which we have accepted as part of our normal self. We are unable to think rightly and truly, for, as has been said, "the mind is the slayer of the Real". But it *is* possible so to control the workings of the mind that it becomes an increasingly clear mirror to reflect whatever of Truth is possible to us at our present stage of development.

What we can do with the imagination depends upon how pure we are in life and motive, how true, how lovely, and how sensitive in ourselves. Is ours the imagination of an earthly mind, tainted by desire ? If so, it will reflect only our relation to the earth. It is not enough simply to imagine ; there must be right imagination. The first step in the Noble Eight-fold Path is right imagination, as well as right thought and right resolve, and we have to establish ourselves in that rightness if ours is to be the imagination of the heaven-born mind, an emanation from Âtma-Buddhi, which can search all things with its pure inner light.

Imagination must become a faculty whose rays can be projected heavenward, even up to the archetype, the wonders of the Divine Mind. It must be like the modern radar, a beam which can move through space to disclose those hidden shapes that are enveloped in the darkness which surrounds our present so-called sight. Some day we shall be able to project the rays of the Truth within us, to which nothing is impenetrable, so that we will know the nature of each thing as it is. In the consciousness of the Âtman, as we become channels of its influence even down here, we will be able to see everything in a light that reveals its hidden richness. Everything in the universe will then unfold its meaning to us and we will be able to know and rejoice in that meaning.

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## IX

### THE PURE FORM

EVERY idea, including every emotion, that springs within us, seeks a natural expression, because it has in it in some degree the vital urge of which the scientist-philosopher Bergson has written. It represents a life-impulse, and life creates on every plane its own instrument for the transformation of its inherent potentiality, its own form for the expression of what it contains. When there is no deflection of the forces involved in this expression by any other extraneous force, the idea finds its right embodiment. The expression may be at the mental, emotional or physical level, in words or gestures. Movements in dance may be classed with gestures, because each movement is expressive, whether it is a studied motion or a spontaneous one, if it has a rhythm, if it flows in a particular pattern, and makes a total or integral impression.



Every person develops gestures and poses, unconsciously for the most part, as we can observe in ordinary life, because of this natural action within himself.

When the idea is beautiful in the true sense, that is, according to a true standard (though in this matter there can be no standardization), the expression or gesture will also be beautiful. But any force extraneous to the expression of the idea, as is brought in when the person is self-conscious, immediately breaks up or disturbs the flow of those forces from the idea, which if left to themselves would create the appropriate form. The form that an idea takes of its own accord, when brought down to a physical level, whether in words, movements, or some work of art, is akin to the action of an instinct. The idea, which when it is beautiful has both the aspects of thought and feeling, will create a form which is fitting and true if the form results from the creative force of the idea, that is, if the idea is allowed to create its own form, its own embodiment, in the manner in which an instinct in Nature finds its own way, its own means, to fulfil itself.

We associate any kind of a pattern with a mind, and we may therefore ask : Is there a

mind at work in life-processes, veiled in the instinct, though it is not the mind of the entity displaying the instinct? There is the Divine, the Universal Mind, in every life-process—the mind of a pure mathematician in the construction of the phenomenal universe, construction from moment to moment or continuous creation.

It is life that creates, as the *Upanishads* taught long ago, and the best effect is a natural effect, because it is an integral effect, and this is produced when the pure idea is free to make its own way into the manifesting form. The construction is perfect, as we can see on the physical plane in the structure of the physical brain, the eye or the ear, when it is left to Nature, who has not yet exhausted her ingenuity, but is still in the process of bringing to light an exhaustless store.

The individual who aims at bringing down the idea plays his part best when he is negative to it, in the sense of being purely sensitive to it, without introducing any positive or personal elements not belonging to that idea, thus making himself a channel for the self-creation by which the idea flows into its proper form. This implies that the field for the flow of the idea into

the details of its expression must be open and clear. To put it in other words, the material for expression, the links and associations that are involved in the means of using the material, the necessary plasticity of technique, must be readily available.

Instincts are fixed and repetitive, however beautiful and wonderful. But man has risen to a level where instinctual expression is intended to be combined with variation and originality. He has in him a power, latent at present, except in rare instances, to create centres of instinctual action in his own consciousness, that is, to bring into existence ideas, each of which can blossom at lower levels into things of beauty and marvelous effect—effect and beauty not created by the individual mind, but pertaining to the idea itself. Creation by every master-artist, when we can trace its genesis, will be found to consist in his conceiving the idea at a moment of inspiration and then following the natural flow of its development, representing that flow in the medium, whatever it may be. This is pure action from a plane of consciousness into which the confusing influences arising from the interplay of mind and matter through the medium of

sensation do not obtain entry. It is action from its own centre by an integral consciousness which has not been divided by attachment to elements in the personality, involving attractions and repulsions.

As idea and form are naturally related, the form must suggest the idea. If the form is ideally beautiful, the idea which is its subjective self must have a truth possessing a unique value, being a denizen of Reality, of Being which is perfect, as distinguished from the Becoming, which is evolution. The phrase "ideally beautiful" is used to distinguish the true quality from what may be regarded as beautiful, which would vary with individuals. For the same reason, the expression "pure form" used in the heading of this chapter, is preferable to the phrase "beautiful form," as the concept of purity does not allow that latitude in understanding and interpretation which obtains in notions of the beautiful. Nothing is ideally or truly beautiful which is not pure, in the strict sense of the word.

Truth in idea, Beauty in form, these are the inner and outer correlatives. Each attests the other. They are the two sides, subjective and

objective, of the same self-contained manifestation.

It is profoundly interesting to note that Plato, in his vision of Ideas, called the Ideas "Forms," thus showing that since each idea, however subjective, has an individuality, that individuality is the form on the plane of ideation ; even on that plane we are already in the world of forms.

In any attempt to create the ideally beautiful down here at the physical level, the attempt succeeds in so far as the form reflects the ideal. From the form to the idea, however subtle, distant and indefinable, the vision and the intuition of the beholder is led, and this leading need not be conscious on the part of the creator of the form, who is concerned only with his creation. The guidance is along channels which are sub-conscious, by suggestion, delicate and imperceptible. The idea which is represented in the beautiful form of a gesture, pose or movement, as in Bharata Nâtya, the South Indian classical dance, or in ballet in the West, which aims at ideally beautiful lines and forms, and thus has achieved a pure and classic grace incomparable with any other mode of western dancing, is not necessarily the sentiment or

action or thing which is expressed in the words or legend accompanying the dance. The words may be entirely changed or omitted, but the forms have their own intrinsic value and will suggest different things to different minds ; from the standpoint of the idea behind the form, these suggestions to individual minds are different approaches to the idea which, as it is abstract, is subtle like a mathematical truth, capable of symbolizing different phenomenal facts.

The creation of ideal beauty in a form, whether of thought, words, music, sculpture, painting, architecture or dance, has this effect : it touches in the beholders or listeners, when they are sufficiently calmed and sensitive, those centres of consciousness which are receptive to the idea reflected in the form, and thus helps the consciousness to be active on a plane, nearer to Reality, which it normally does not touch, from which it has unfortunately excluded itself.

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## X

### THE SUPREME BEING

AT all times there have been men whose minds have turned in the direction of speculation as to the origin and end of things, the fundamental unity of Nature, the original substance out of which everything has come, the source of all the energy which is displayed in innumerable forms in the phenomena of Nature.

One person talks of Fire as the origin of everything, as the chief God, the underlying substance of things ; another speaks of Water, the great deep, as both the womb and cradle of Nature. Then there are similar references to Ether, Air and Earth. Modern scholars are baffled by these terms, which with the ancient philosophers did not have that literal meaning which we ordinarily assign to them, but had a certain technical and inclusive sense. When these different symbols are dwelt upon and belauded

by different philosophers as the principle most important to the universe, as for instance in the ancient Indian hymns, they are approaching, each in his own way, the same central truths.

Among the various terms used by the ancient philosophers of the West, both before and after Plato, one which in modern Theosophical literature has attained a great depth of meaning and significance, contrasting with the feeble uncertain interpretations of the modern scholars, is the word "Logos". It has been variously understood in the contexts of the old writings as the Source of life and intelligence ; the Law of world-processes ; the Mediator between God and the world ; the Divine Reason ; the unitary Cosmic Principle, and so on. All this is extremely bewildering to a person who has not been led to grasp the splendid totality of which those descriptions are different facets, either by such a teaching as we have in modern Theosophy—modern in its form, but in essence also the most ancient Wisdom—or by some teacher who knows the truth about these matters.

When the truth is understood, each of these ideas from the past falls into its proper place, and we are in a position to gain a more rounded



conception of them by synthesizing whatever true in them. All the ideas that we sum up under the title of Theosophy are strictly related to another, making a rational whole, so that in consideration of them we are able to let reason, not blind faith, be our guide. We have, however, to accept certain truths temporarily as hypotheses, because of their very nature and limited comprehension.

Reason implies the establishment of relations, and all that we *can* know must in some manner be related to us. But what there is to know is not the same as what we know at present. We know very little even of ourselves. But when we have in some degree fulfilled the advice, "Know thyself," that knowledge must through existing relations take us to all other knowledge. With the aid of the Divine Reason in ourselves—which is much more than the reason we employ—we can understand what that Reason has created, or rather, the reflection of Reason in the universe as we find it. When we come to an Absolute so unrelated to all we know that we cannot derive it in any manner from the premises of our knowledge it is then that

we accept the Absolute it is because that truth supplies a need in our thinking and is suggested by logical processes found warranted by our experience.

The Fire and the Water symbolize first of all—though they had other meanings too—the energy of the universal *Purusha* or Spirit, and the receptivity of Root-Matter or *Mûlaprakṛiti*, respectively. Water was, of old, an appropriate symbol of Matter, because of its divisibility and tendency to change. The divine Fire entering into that state of Matter, regarded as equally divine, causes all the modifications in the universe as we know it. According to Heraclitus, who is the reputed originator of the Fire idea, all things are in a flux, a statement which is supported fully by the evolutionary phenomena and the analysis of Science. This universal change, referred to also in Buddhism under the truth of Impermanence, is the result of the operation of the one Energy, which assumes diverse forms in the universal process by entering diverse states or combinations of matter. The Theosophist can fully enter into the inwardness of the statement that Fire is the purest of all elements and is at the root of all phenomena.

The energy described as Fire descends from the spiritual level and, taking a downward road, enters first the psychic levels, also symbolized by Water, and then the Earth of gross materiality. Later it re-ascends from Earth into Water, and back again into the original state of a pure Fire. This is in accordance with the cyclic view of manifestation which begins from above. Ascent follows descent in the cycle of man's earthly existence, as well as in the cycle of cosmic manifestation.

The word "Fire" has been used to indicate a certain intensity of divine action, but the action may be constructive or destructive. The one Energy, which is the Shakti of Shiva in Indian cosmology, under certain conditions constructs or regenerates, and under other conditions destroys. There is Fire in every plant and tree, for in every process of growth there are forces intensely at work to produce the form of the next moment.

The idea of Fire as a symbol of the Deity and as an omnipresent Principle in Nature is found in Zoroastrianism. The first Zoroaster spoke of the Logos as Fire. These old symbols have not been used arbitrarily, but have a

profound meaning, and he who ponders over the nature of the symbols will be able to discover something of the nature of the things symbolized. Thus, when Fire is spoken of, it means there is a fiery quality, one which is irresistible, in the cause of the change or transformation taking place all the time. Fire, if we include electric fire too, consumes everything except itself. It dries up the waters—though not the source of the waters, which is eternal—when the time comes for a particular universe to end.

Manifestation, as it is from within, must obviously be the result of a will—the word “desire” has also been used, as indicating perhaps a downward movement—to that effect. However, it is not a blind will, but a will equated with a perfect Intelligence. The forces that flow from that willing carry the workings of that Intelligence in all their ramifications. If the forces are summed up as Energy, it is the Energy of cosmic, or as H. P. Blavatsky puts it, pre-cosmic Ideation. The cosmos being periodical, its emergence out of the Divine Mind brings with it the flood of ideas in the Divine Mind. In this view, Mind—which of course is not mind as we know it, but its noumenon—is at the back even

of life in the manifested universe. That is the seeming order to our differentiating mind. But they are two aspects of one Reality, co-eval and con-substantial. Existence (*Sat*) in Indian philosophy is inseparable from consciousness or thought (*Chit*) as the case may be.

Ordinarily we think of force as mechanical, blind and brutal, and we think of intelligence, self-determination, will and thought as something quite different from force. That again is as we find it in this lowest of worlds where the true nature of things is veiled heavily from our sight, but as we ascend from the gross to a subtler level, there is an increasing unification of different processes which would not seem possible down here. As we proceed towards the origin of things, which is an ever-present Source, force and intelligence are not two separate things, but take on more and more the characteristics of each other. It is all intelligent evolution operated with differentiated forces.

Each force operates like an instinct in Nature, according to a hidden law of action, a hidden intelligence which seems to know how it should act, what is the end to be achieved, and what are the means by which that end can be brought

about. And Intelligence does not, in its spiritual quality, sit back, as it were, unable to do anything but look for some agent to do its will. Intelligence and will operating together shape the means together with the end, and thus give rise to certainty of action undeviating from the plans of that Intelligence. The power of being an efficient cause is blended with the Divine Intelligence, universally present in Nature. But a lesser cause always acts within the limits marked by a greater cause. A hierarchy of Intelligences, a hierarchy of causes.

According to the philosophers referred to, all things happen through the Logos, the Word, through which or whom was manifested the Divine Reason or the Divine Wisdom. He is the Cause of causes, the generator of Light and Life, according to Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher, as quoted by H. P. Blavatsky. There is the conception in Hindu philosophy of Brahman in His two aspects, with and without qualities. In the latter aspect He is thought of as the Supreme Purusha, the Mighty Universal Man. But in the views referred to above, the Logos is a Law or Principle which rules and governs the world-processes, and not a Person ; on

at the perfect points of entrance into the lower and the upper spheres respectively.

One of the meanings given to the expression "Logos" is that as He is present in each thing, He contains in the form of His presence the formula of its development. In each thing that is individual, in each type, each species, there is a pattern which determines its evolution. Each pattern is different from the others. The lotus seed has in it the entire shape of the lotus, and so with all other things ; for each of which there is a final form of perfection. Since there are innumerable things in the universe, each carrying within itself the form of its uniqueness, there are innumerable Logoi. Although they may be conceived as different from one another, as the rose is different from the royal palm or the lotus, they are not so many unrelated Logoi, but all factors of one Logos, emanations from the Unity.

This may be described as pantheistic monism. It embodies a concept of Unity in plurality. If there is truth in the idea of a unity, there is also truth in plurality, so far as our perceptions are concerned. It is difficult to understand the relation of the One and the Many, to conceive

these Logoi as independent Powers, yet at the same time as aspects or rays from the one central and inextinguishable Sun.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been spoken of as a profound mystery. How does the Trinity spring from the Unity? Also, if there are seven Logoi, like the seven colors of the spectrum or the seven notes of the musical scale, through whom life and light issue, how do the Seven arise? The Logos has been described as the Concealed of the concealed and the Lord of all Mysteries. The more we probe into these descriptions, the more will we find in them. The ideas are profound, because the conception of the Logos sums up so much. He sums up in Himself the whole universe on its subjective or life side.

If we imagine the Logos as a point, which in truth is dimensionless, that point is the centre of an infinite radiation. There pass through the point an infinity of lines, also a purely geometrical conception, for we can never actually see a line which consists of points in that order. Every point can have innumerable lines drawn through it. The point, in this symbol, is connected with the external universe by these



innumerable lines. If we think of the point as the origin, or the First Logos, first in manifestation, then these lines are Intelligences which emanate from the Logos, as well as powers or aspects of His Being.

We think first of the point, and then of the lines. But when there is the point, there are also simultaneously the lines of which the point is the common inter-acting centre. If we think of the Logos as the Unity, He is also a multiplicity of Intelligences who seem to be separate from Him, but are not really, because they are aspects of Him. We have to reconcile in this concept the independence, the individuality of the operating Intelligences and their spiritual unity. The point is the origin and centre, as also a synthesis. It is the beginning of a total manifestation, as well as of all individual manifestations, and in it all the individual manifestations are finally synthesized and resolved.

The Seven who make the One are distinct from the One, yet not separate. They constitute separate centres of action ; each centre has its own individuality. Yet perfectly co-ordinated, they are like centres in one body or brain which acts as a whole. The Seven are manifestations of

the One—not creations—which appear simultaneously with the One.

The extraordinary nature of this phenomenon is illustrated in the principle of the mind, which was described by Plato as a compound of “same and other”. Each man is an individual entity, free to make his own way, though limited by his own Karma, but he is being evolved through those very limitations to unite himself freely and voluntarily with the Source from which he has fallen. When he has thus reintegrated himself, we can conceive of him as a centre of independent thought and action, perfectly co-ordinated with the other centres in the thought-sphere of the Logos, separate yet one with Him. In the whole, unity and multiplicity are both facts and simultaneous. The unity creates the diversity, if we think of its action on matter, but in the unity itself there is a multiplicity.

In a book recently published under the title, *The Fourth Gospel and the Logos Doctrine*, by R. G. Bury, the author gives some definitions of the Logos from Philo, and uses the adjectives “bewildering,” and “perplexing,” with reference to them. The definitions are of course translations, which more often than not fail to convey from

one language to another the original connotation. This has been the case with most Samskrit words of philosophic import. The Logos has been referred to by Philo as "The Mind or Reason or God," also as "the sum of the Ideas which constitute that Mind". In another place he speaks of the Logos as "Second God, the Immanent Deity". It is obvious that he means by the first God the self-existent One, that is, the Absolute or Brahman without qualities. If we understand God to mean the self-existent One, who or which is also the All, the Logos or the Word is an emanation from Him. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God." Here there is a clear distinction between the Word and God, although it is also stated that "The Word was God".

The Logos Himself is both transcendent and immanent. Shri Krishna, speaking in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the Logos, says: "Having established this universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain." Even if we think of the Solar Logos, it is not the whole of His life which is embodied in His system, but only a fragment. His activities outside the system are far greater than those within it, we are told. With regard

to each Logos in the order of Logoi, He can express only a fragment of Himself in any system He may create, for the simple reason that expression or manifestation means limitation of Himself.

We cannot separate the Divine Mind from the Divine Ideas, because it is a perfect Mind. It is not disorganized or unorganized, searching, straying, like our minds. Manas is the thinking Principle. When the thought is perfect, and comprehends everything that needs to be comprehended in perfect order, then it is a universe of ideas, and that is the Divine Mind. The contents of that Divine Mind are subjective to us ; they are the archetypes towards which everything is evolving.

A third definition is : "The Logos is the first begotten Son whose Mother is Wisdom." He is Horus, the Son of Osiris and Isis. The Mother is Root-Matter or *Mûlaprakṛiti*. He who has the qualities of the ever-free and in itself unknowable Spirit, and yet manifests the qualities in the limitations of Form or Matter, may be regarded as begotten of both.

Fourthly, He is the image or copy of God ; also mediator between God and the material

world. The manifested Logos must be an image of Himself in the Unmanifest Form, and is the link between the Absolute Deity and the world of Matter. It is made out that the Logos idéa arose as a means of bridging the gulf between God, who abideth forever in Heaven, and Earth. Heaven and Earth typify here the transcendent state and the limitations of immanence.

Son, mediator (not in the sense of Christian theology), agent, instrument, are all descriptions used to convey His status and functions. The Logos has been described as the one Individuality or Ego, of which all individual Egos are the reflections. He may be regarded as an Ego in the purely philosophic sense, because He is the focus of the universal Mind. He has been given also the title of the Heavenly Man, because He is the prototype of the earthly man formed in His image. In the Stanzas of *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, it is said of Him that "He shines forth as the Sun"—recalling the description "Mountain of Light" in the Hindu books—and "He is the Blazing Dragon of Wisdom."

These striking descriptions, and many others possible, only show that, as said of Vishnu, the All-Pervader in Hindu cosmology, also called

Maha-Vishnu in His super-cosmic aspect, His names are innumerable, because His nature is so manifold in its unity. In the words of the *Bhagavad Gita*, "As marvellous one regardeth Him ; as mārvellous another speaketh thereof ; as marvellous another heareth thereof ; yet having heard, none indeed understandeth."

In all the conceptions with which the reality of what He is has been surrounded by those who have had a far glimpse of it in some direct or indirect manner, the one difficulty which more than any other seems to have troubled early Christian thought is the place of the Holy Spirit in relation to it. The very words "Holy Spirit" suggest a subtle, intangible, impersonal yet potent influence. It cannot be that this influence —the power that flows in—is independent of the Logos ; for He is the beginning and end of all created things. The influence must flow through Him or from Him. He is born of the Light, as the Son of Light, or He is the very Source of Light, the Father of Lights, as He is certainly the origin of all manifested Light.

The relation of the Son to the Father must be to us a mystery until we reach the plane of that mystery and pass beyond it, a hope that

we may entertain as believers in Immortality meaning by "we" that nature of the individuality in each which is capable of rising to that state. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Shri Krishna speaks of His two natures, the nature of Matter which we may identify with our conceptions of Nature, and the Divine Nature, which is an omnipresent Light that beats upon Matter, impressing upon it the Divine Ideas.

These are ideas which are extremely interesting. But how interesting and how practical depends on how real they are to us. Each one puts into all such ideas the contents of his own consciousness. Such an idea as the Logos can be the most wonderful conceivable, if it is given a meaning evolved out of the riches of one's own consciousness; or its content may be poor. It is then just a word which is invested with connotations that are not related to it at all, or may even be the reverse of Reality.

There is a difference between Metaphysics and Occultism. Metaphysics is what lies beyond physics and seeks to explain both mind and the phenomena of matter by the truths it postulates. In Occultism we deal with force, reality and life.

its theoretical aspect, but does sometimes. Whatever does not touch us vitally tends to become unreal. All that is said about the Logos, for instance, may seem to some remote and unreal. That is because they have not yet grasped the reality of it. But the Logos is not something far away and abstract ; He is a reality existing here and now. He is in each one's heart, as the Power working therein. It is within our own hearts that we can sense His presence. When we do so, He will be to us a tremendous reality, beside which everything else will pale into utter insignificance.

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## XI

### BEING AND BECOMING

ALL Nature is a Becoming, for it represents a universal process to which that word is applied from the standpoint of something within each thing which becomes—the life, the nature of the thing and its consciousness. The word “Becoming” implies a continuity. That which has become what it is is in essence the same as what it was, yet different. The change that takes place is described from another point of view by Science as evolution, and without this psychological connotation. The old types have gone, but from the old, something new and better has emerged.

Every individual presents in his nature outwardly the aspect of a Becoming. He is changing all the time. This is true not only with regard to each man, but to each thing or life in Nature.

Yet in the midst of this Becoming there is a state which may be described as Being. The Logos, whose Life is the One Life, manifests Himself in each individual thing as a state of Being in that individuality. If He manifests Himself in each thing, we cannot but think of Him as perfect in each of His manifestations. He must be perfect, whether in infinity, or amidst limitations which are the definitions of finiteness. Every individuality, every form, has to have a definition, and is necessarily limited by that definition.

Shri Krishna, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, speaking as an Incarnation of the Logos, says : " I am the Self seated in the heart of all Beings," and proceeds to describe Himself as the essence of each distinctive type of Being to be found in the universe. That is the Divine Immanence. If He is there, He must be there without being involved in the Becoming, but in a state of perfection appropriate to each particular thing, that is, in that state which represents its perfection-to-be. In a perfect state there is no need for change, no cause making for change.

If we can imagine the Divine Being as dwelling in some mysterious or mystical manner

in each individuality, He must be there in a state which, because of its very perfection, does not admit of change. Perfection is an end in itself, not a means to an end, even if it be a limited perfection. It represents a peak beyond which one cannot go, even if there are other peaks.

There are, of course, innumerable states making up the process of Becoming for each individual thing, some permitting more of a revelation of the nature of the inner Being than another. Even if all are Gods—"Know ye not ye are Gods"—the Godliness is more apparent in one than in another. In each state of Becoming the Divine Being is unfolded in a measure commensurate with that state.

The use of the word "measure" implies no imperfectness. The state of Being in each thing may be imaged as a perfect circle, which has been used as a symbol of eternity, since in a circle there is no beginning or end. There may be an infinity of circles, varying in magnitude from infinity to a point. But whatever the magnitude, each circle is complete in itself.

Imagine, then, an infinite series of concentric circles, all representing one and the same Being, but from a continually enlarging point of view.

These circles, from another point of view which includes a new dimension, may be thought of as sections of a perfect sphere perpendicular to one of its innumerable diameters. All such sections, of which there would be an infinity, would constitute the totality of Being along that diameter, which is one of its extensions, there being an infinite number of such extensions. Thus, the nature of Being, approached from any direction, that is, through the innate quality of any archetypal form, is one yet infinite, unchanging in its unity, but varying in its self-revelation.

What can Being mean to us? Being is a timeless state, a state of completeness in which there is no void, a state such as we experience in a moment of utter love or perfect beauty. It is an absolute state which, when it occurs, breaks the continuity of the relative. The movement of our minds is by association, from one thing to another. But occasionally the consciousness—it can hardly be called the mind—falls into a state which is complete in itself. When the experience is thus complete, it has no relation of continuity with what went before or what is to come after. A necessary continuity would imply for any moment in it a lack of

self-containment, therefore imperfection. Thus for the moment, the succession which we call time is broken.

The absoluteness consists in a state which is undivided, that is, a unity. If there is the unity of all, and the Logos retains His nature of unity in each manifestation of Himself, there are no parts even in that manifestation, in the sense of elements in it that make for a Becoming. That which is one is perfectly integrated, is always an absolute.

The state of being in any individual is a reflection of the universal Being, a completeness which is included in a greater completeness. Even when it is touched or reflected slightly in a receptive consciousness, it awakes a sense of oneness, a community even if not a communion with all other beings. The feeling that the other is different and separate is forgotten for the moment. The other is different, yes, but not separate. This inner feeling is not very much removed from love ; but it is love without possession and self-enjoyment.

Love carries with it the significance of an outgoing force, a subjective objectivity, an intense radiation. But a state of Being suggests

self-containment. Is the state which is called Being a self-contained state or a state of forth-going? It is both. When there is a condition of harmony, it is self-contained, yet the harmony may have the loveliest effect on all who are receptive to that effect. It is like the fire in a precious gem, which is both quiescent and lustrous.

Where there is completeness, a sense of fullness, there is absolute happiness. In our normal experience being in love represents this state, because when a person is in love—if it is a pure love, not merely a form of lust, a love that seeks to give and not take or appropriate—there is no desire in him to go beyond it. He is supremely content. In that completeness there is beauty, eternal and immortal, because the experience of the beautiful is always a complete experience.

Although Being and Becoming are such different states, there must be a relation between the two. If there were no relation at all, we would not be in a position even to discuss the nature of Being. That relationship may be described as one of pure cognition from the level of the Being. In the light that emanates from the state of Being there is the

possibility of understanding the process of Becoming.

The light that enters into the Becoming creates the possibility of Discrimination. The mind which is enlightened by this light does not set up an aim or goal outside the state of Being. If it willed something outside that state, it would be a false will. The only true will is a true or natural expression of the Being, which expression is also Being. For if Being is a complete state, there is nothing that pertains to it outside that completeness. The desire for something outside the experience of the moment belongs to the levels of incompleteness. In the Perfect Man, in the state of perfect Being, there can be no such desire. Every desire, all greed, all fear, all ambition is a distortion, not of that Being which is an integral harmony, but of the aura, the outer sheath, the reflecting and transforming medium with which it is enveloped. The will of pure Being is a perfect self-fulfilment, the development or expression of that harmony which it is, in forms whose essence or en-souling ideas are implicit in the spirit of that harmony.

Not to "become" does not imply a static condition, nor contentment with self. Being is potentially always a dynamic state. It generates motion. It is the one Being, wherein lies coiled the serpent of Eternity, which is the cause of the universal energies. What makes the wrong motion is the becoming which dreams of self-glorification and self expansion.

When the word "Being" is used, as with reference to the Supreme Being or the Logos we import into the conception which we form a certain sense of self-hood, a note of human self-assertion or at least self-affirmation—I am I—which is our constant experience of our selves. But pure Being involves no such conscious self-projection. Being is simply existence (ignoring for the moment the signification of "ex" in the word "existence"). There is no discord between Being in any form and its universal background, just as there can be no discord between the Logos and *Parabrahman* or *Mûlaprakṛiti*.

The perfection towards which each thing is evolving, along with the perfection of every other being, makes a whole because they are all



aspects of the One Being which is perfect. The perfection of each thing is a state of the total Perfection. The Being of one and all is the beginning, the heart, and the end of their Becoming. The consciousness that is timeless rests in that Being, which is one with all other Being, each expressing but a state of the One Being. When the consciousness is not involved in a becoming, Being remains, and it is merged in that Being.

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## XII

### THE NATURE OF WISDOM

WHAT is Wisdom? What is the Wisdom? The Wisdom is the wisdom of God, the wisdom or knowledge pertaining to the Self. The wisdom of God is His nature, although it may be regarded also as characterizing His ways. If the nature of the Self, each Self (the two terms amount to the same, they name the same Reality), is in essence the same as the nature of God, then knowledge of the Self is a knowledge of God, at least the beginning of it.

When we say wisdom or knowledge, are wisdom and knowledge the same? No. But in the case of the Self, to know is to be wise.

All knowledge was once divided into *para* (higher or supreme) and *apara* (lower). Knowledge of all objects and all sciences is the lower. Knowledge of That by which all else is

known is the higher, that is, of God or the Self, the two being identical in essence. Knowledge of the Self is wisdom, because the Self contains the essence of everything.

You know whatever you know, always, within you. Knowledge is a subjective phenomenon. You are one. So the knowledge of everything is integrated in you. I believe that if the truest thoughts—and the most beautiful—present in all minds at any time be put together, they will make a perfect and very wonderful unity.

In the Self in its purity, because of its sensitiveness, there is a record of all that surrounds it. It is the most sensitive of all sensitive things. Whatever rays pass through it bring their message, which is recorded on its unfading reel. And there are rays emanating from every single thing—not at the levels we perceive of course—which traverse the cosmos. In the Self is a knowledge of the soul of all things.

The wisdom of God is in everything. He is in everything. His nature pervades everything. His deep purpose and intelligence are always in everything.

Theosophy may be defined—among other ways of defining it—as the Wisdom that is in

all things, severally and *in toto*. We may not be able to perceive the wisdom concealed in each thing, but it is there. One is susceptible to that wisdom only as one's heart is pure and open.

All things are evolving in this evolving universe. There is a design in each which is being brought to light—growing, from our point of view. But there is also a scaffolding which confuses the plan—not to the mind of the Architect, but to us who behold the building from outside. But in some things the construction has come to a certain stage of perfection. Such things afford us an opening into the mind of the Designer. Such, for instance, is a lotus, a rose, or any beautiful living form. All things are living, from the Theosophical point of view, though there are degrees of life and action.

Wisdom is not knowledge, because to us knowledge is of form. Wisdom is knowledge of what the form contains. What is the signification of any form or thing? Is it its utility? We are apt, of course, to judge by its utility to us. But that is an extremely limited, homo-centric, individualistic view. Each thing in Nature has a significance

and functioning. Hence the injunction not to kill, as far as possible. There is an innate quality in each, which is seeking to come out.

That innate quality or nature of the thing is in its life, what holds it together. I do not mean the life of the material of which that form is composed, but the indwelling life in that form which integrates it. We see the distinction in the case of a human body, though here we would call the indwelling life the soul. Let us use the word "soul," if that is clearer. The soul, we presume, fits the form to a greater or less extent. The form is what it is, or on the way to being what it is—meaning the evolutionary way—because of the nature of its ensoulment.

The wisdom of God, whose life is in that soul, flows to the form, I imagine, through that soul—flows in this sense, that the pattern of the form, its processes, its whole nature, even what it symbolizes, all express something of the nature of that life, its wisdom, that is, the wisdom manifested in it. I include the symbolic suggestion, because a symbol is a sign in Nature which is a reflection of the archetypal or Divine Idea.

The true object of the existence of a thing may of course be the service it gives, its part in the evolutionary process, its action on all other things. Since everything is a certain flow of forces, everything helps all other things along, directly or indirectly. This follows from the truth of the relatedness of things.

But each thing exists also for itself as an expression of the life of the Godhead within, fulfilling in its very existence part of His design. The highest end is always an end in itself. Existence is such an end, in eternity, if not in time.

We see that truth in an object of beauty. It exists for itself as a self-revelation of the beauty of God. The highest end that is served, so far as we can see, is that revelation. It needs no other justification for its existence. In the highest form of beauty, that is, when the revelation is perfect, there is the highest significance.

Surely Wisdom implies a knowledge of the signification of things, significance to an order external to the thing and significance in the thing itself. Significance comprises purpose, which is continuous. The purpose which runs from beginning to end and is revealed in the end would be the deepest, the most lasting purpose.

There is purpose in each thing, purpose in the totality of things, purpose in the universal process. When this purpose is realized as the purpose innate in oneself, there is wisdom. All subordinate purposes take their rise from the one original purpose, which may be described as self-fulfilment. Thus we come again to the Self. Knowledge of the fulfilment, which implies action, depends on knowledge of the Self.

It is true conversely that the knowledge of the Self depends upon action. For nature and action are correlatives and ultimately synonymous. If there is no flow of force, or if there is a wrong direction of action, it means that the nature which surrounds the Self is not its nature, and the Self can be known only through its nature.

So, wisdom is not a matter of study, but a matter of living, of action. We talk about the wisdom, but except in so far as we are stimulated to be wise, we do not thereby necessarily become wise. Wisdom is not knowledge, but lies in the use we make of knowledge. It arises from knowledge guided by love. For loving is a way of knowing—the lover has a divine knowledge of the beloved, divine in

quality—and it is a state of completeness, an end in itself. To be in love with an individual is to re-act fully to him or her, directly, without the darkening effect of self which interposes a barrier. To use knowledge with goodness is to make it shine with a value which reflects Eternity in time.

We all think we know, when we do not know, or when we know but partially. We need to cast off the fetter of ignorance. The first step is to become conscious of our ignorance. The more you know, the more you realize how little you know. It is the wise man who is humble. It is not possible for us to have all knowledge. There will always be in each one's knowledge lacunae which may be pitfalls for his thought. One can carry a vast load of learning, yet be thoroughly foolish. On the other hand, it is possible with a little knowledge to be greatly wise. I imagine such would be the case when a soul deeply matured in wisdom takes on an infant body and dwells therein through the adolescent years.

Wisdom lies less in what we learn and more in our reactions to that learning ; less in the quantity and more in the quality of our knowledge ;



less in the accumulation of facts and nomenclature, and more in the knowledge of principles ; less in the possession of ideas, and more in the right employment of them ; in a word, less in all that we gather and must shed, and more in what we assimilate into the texture of that Being which is an immortal reflection of the universal Spirit.

The Wisdom of God is an attribute of His nature. In the highest sense He is the principle of Wisdom, or Wisdom in the abstract, with an endless potentiality of manifesting it in all possible forms at every level. The nature of the not-Self, when re-ordered with Wisdom, is assimilated to the Self. Order is Heaven's first law, but it is a divine order, which as it is brought into existence re-unites Earth and Heaven.

When we think of the wisdom of God, we have to think of an active creative principle. It is feminine, when it is reflected in the mother or form aspect, and builds up the order which reflects the manifesting quality. Every form which has meaning is a certain order, the order of its elements and functioning, an order in time, an order in space. An order is a perfect curve, whatever the nature of the curve, which always

follows a law. Law and order are thus eternally connected. The law of the Divine Being, which is its expression, makes the Divine Order, so much so that in Buddhist thought, Law takes the place of Being. We think of Being as an Individuality. When the Individuality is perfect, when the logic of its formation is complete, it is the manifestation of a Law. To discover the law of one's own being, and live it, is true wisdom.

As with God so with man. As man creates in the likeness of his Being—creation can only be by an energy which partakes of his Being—he grows wise.

Wisdom is an integrity of thought which is a natural integration. It is a blossoming of the quality of Life, revealing Life's deep meaning. It is the unity of the all reflected in the unity of a part. It is a movement of life which shows life in its superlativeness and best. It is thought released from every tether, formed by a direct intonation from Heaven. It is a divine ray which penetrates heart and mind and unifies both. It is the breath of God, of which the heat is life, and the light is love and beauty. It is the abolition of otherness.

Often in the world it is thought that wisdom lies in caution. The notion arises from a self-regarding instinct. Wisdom may lie no less in courage. In reality, it lies in sure action which rises above opposites. He is the wise man who has by perfect living gained the instinct of rightness by which he guides himself whether in thought or action, who has found that centre of balance which is always over his point of contact with circumstances. He is the man into whom Nature pours the riches of all her instincts.

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## XIII

### THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL REALITY

MANKIND has always been engaged in a search for what satisfies, which later turns into a search for what promises to be real, permanent, and lasting. In the earlier stages, each seeks it in numerous forms of worldly gratification ; in power and position ; in physical, emotional and mental comforts of different sorts ; in relief from boredom, through periodic excitements ; in systems, faiths and practices that promise security here and in the hereafter ; in all manner of things that offer escape and oblivion from sorrow, difficulties, problems and responsibilities. At each point the Reality is sought in that which it is imagined will give the greatest thrill of happiness and the most lasting satisfaction. But time after time, the individual finds that those things to which he has clung are, in fact,

false and misleading, and grievously let him down in the end.

His beliefs have taken him only to temporary refuges and creations of the mind, islands in the stream of progress, islands of security, self-isolation in various forms, the maintenance of the "I". Eventually a time comes when that which the world has to offer and all the creations of the mind cease to satisfy, and the individual begins to search for a Reality outside the nature of the experiences he has had, the gratifications which have proved so transitory and disappointing. However, it is only at a comparatively late stage of his evolution that the individual begins seriously to contemplate the possibility of something unknown and other than what he has so far experienced. He thinks of a Real as distinguished from the unreal.

But what is Reality? Is it a direct first-hand knowledge or experience of some ultimate relation between Spirit and matter, the state of an Absolute amidst the relative, something that connects the origin with the end? Is it a Truth, a Principle, a state of consciousness in which there is an integration of all the three elements—knower, knowing and the object of knowledge?

Or is it the essence of all our experiences at every level ; a state of union with everything from which we feel separate ; a happiness not of time but of Eternity ; love raised to the nth degree ; a state in which the whole universal process and oneself are perceived in terms other than what we now understand, and from quite a new dimension ?

It must in one form or other be *all* of these, and infinitely more than what these words convey to us, more than we can ever guess at present. Any Reality that is sought with intensity must be of the nature of an unknown, for all concepts built upon memories of the known are bound to be of the same nature as the experiences in that memory. We can speculate on the nature of this unknown, but then we do so with a mind conditioned by previous experiences. As we speculate, we form images which may prove to be but screens that obstruct the truth, hindrances to the very search in which we are engaged. If the Reality is unlimited, that is, without a sense of limitation in the experience of it, consequently without any lines of division, and non-objective, it must be of an order transcending all levels of our present

knowledge. No description can give us that Reality, because every description will land us in a wrong identification by a mind limited to the ground of its own past. There are descriptions of the Self—equating this word for the moment with Reality—in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, couched in lyrical terms. But they only speak of the Reality, and describe it as indescribable.

If the Reality is an  $x$  in an equation comprising various other terms of our experience, its nature may be inferred from those known terms. But that inference would be first a purely mental construct, and secondly not an experience transcending the known. No doubt life and mind and sense-impressions are all manifestations of Something which we may call the All, but then the All must comprise infinitely more. If these manifestations are only an indication, a shadow, we do not know what they indicate. We cannot know the relation between the Real and the unreal, until we know the Real—whatever that relation may be. The higher may include a knowledge of the lower ; but from the level of the lower we cannot guess the nature of the higher.

When we look at things, whether tangible objects or situations, we are using our minds only to interpret them in a certain way. But the truth we seek must be not an interpretation, but a truth in itself, known with the most absolute certainty, a truth of first-hand, not conveyed knowledge, so that we may be in a position to say with St. Paul that even if the whole world should deny it, we will still maintain its authenticity for ourselves.

We may say very legitimately that the Reality for us is in every beautiful thing in Nature, in art, in love, in man's truest and most wonderful thoughts and expressions. No doubt all these do speak of something, but we have yet to come face to face with the Reality which is in *everything*, even in the false exposing its falsity. We get a distant thrill now and then, but our moments of perfect beauty and bliss are few and far between, and we are left for the most part with the problem of ourselves.

Reality can only dawn upon us when we are ready for it. If it is there and shines all the time, it will shine upon us only when we turn ourselves round, revolve our nature to receive its light. As the search for it is a



upon the individual, the experiences of his past. It is not possible for anyone to discuss it with another except in the most general terms.

There is the testimony of the greatest spiritual Teachers of the world that there *is* a Reality to be found, and more than that, it is a possibility for every human being to discover and come to it by himself.

Any approach to Reality which is merely mental must necessarily be superficial. For with all of us mind is one thing and life is another. What is defined by the mind is not what is experienced in the fullness of living. What the mind knows is based on knowledge through the senses and is only inferred knowledge; what it believes is based on insufficient premises and inevitably a result of wishful thinking. In any case a belief, whether mental or emotional, is only a belief and not the wholeness of an active being. When the motive force is not an attraction of the emotions, it is often a repulsion from existing circumstances which lands the thought in a fancied opposite. Whether there is a search for gratification or a wish to escape, both are factors of emotional determinism, acting through an image-making

mind, and are bound to create forms of action and thought to suit the underlying emotions and the mind which acts in collaboration with them.

In what direction, then, shall we proceed? This is determined by the nature of the motive, which ultimately also determines the end. We have to ask ourselves not only : What am I searching for? but also : Why do I search? The motive is not the less powerful because it is under the surface, that is, in the sub-conscious. That which is sub-conscious is more difficult to deal with than what is in the conscious mind. Usually, besides the motive of which the individual is conscious, there are factors which are unnoticed because automatic.

If the object of the search is some form of a hidden support for a psychic disability, a condition of disequilibrium which is painful or uncomfortable without it, the search will end when such support is found. Anything sought for maintaining the self—power, position, even affection and adulation—is of the nature of a support on which that self depends. And so long as that sense of self (which implies a

of the world) persists, there is obviously a binding of the consciousness to the things which create that sense.

The only motive or force which results in an enlargement of the consciousness instead of limiting it further is love in its purest, most selfless, non-dividing sense ; or compassion, a universal sympathy, such as moved the Lord Buddha as Prince Siddhârtha to undertake His search. If the motive is personal, the end is limited by the factors present in that personal aim. Love is a liberator, for in the very nature of love which is pure, impartial, beneficent, and non-possessive, seeking only to serve and not enjoy and appropriate, there is release from whatever binds and encloses a man as a separate self.

The expression "self-enclosing" is used in the writings of J. Krishnamurti, which are wonderfully illuminating as regards this problem. They present in a fresh original form ideas which if found expressed in other terms in ancient teachings only show that the search for Reality in a human world, however much the externals of that world might have altered, has necessarily to be concerned with the same fundamental factors.

How is this love to be evoked in oneself, or attained? We cannot create love. For "we" are the mind which creates the very limitation that is a denial of love. But life, which is a never-ceasing mode of action, has in it an inherent capacity to love, when it ceases to be distorted by the antithesis of self and other.

The way to discover the Reality has been described in the ancient Indian books as a way of repudiation, the casting-off of forms of the unreal by becoming detached from them in our thoughts and emotions. This seems negative, but actually it is not. When there is no going forth to identify oneself with the false, the Truth which is within makes itself manifest. The way is not made for us from without, but we make the way from moment to moment out of our own realizations. The path lies within ourselves. The *Upanishads* speak of this way of withdrawal in the words, "not this, not this"—which is not a formula of escape or flight from responsibility, but a mode of self-ascension.

We all think we know ourselves, but we know only the surface of ourselves. The consciousness that is in each one of us, with which we meet the oncoming world, is acted upon by that world

and moulded by its influences. It is a process of conditioning to which we have been subjected from the moment of our birth. But as we become aware of the ways in which we are conditioned, we withdraw from those ways. We perceive a distinction between ourselves and the conditioning. This line of separation between a Self and a not-Self is drawn again and again. For the not-Self is not only the external world, but also various parts of ourselves. The mind, the emotions, and the consciousness in the physical body are all modifications of the original consciousness.

The consciousness of all of us as children is alike—in its purity, sensitiveness, and freedom to be shaped into any form whatsoever. As we grow up, the mentality of each becomes set and very different from those of others. In each one it becomes an individual structure, composed of distinctive ideas, habits, prejudices, and so on, which have been wrought into it.

In *At the Feet of the Master* the distinction between the Self and the not-Self of mind, emotions and physical body is drawn in a simple yet practical manner, as forms of discrimination between the Real and the unreal.

body—which is compared to a horse to be cared for and used—that it is not the desires nor the mind. Such discrimination seems simple, but if achieved perfectly will carry us to a plane of pure perception, in which the consciousness is uncircumscribed by the forms of its own activity.

It is comparatively easy to separate ourselves from our physical bodies, but quite another matter when it comes to our psychological states, that nature in us which is being moulded constantly by impressions received consciously and sub-consciously, and incorporated in itself. Consciousness is a forthgoing energy which comes from within the being of each one, and is conditioned not only by external circumstances, but also by its own thoughts and action. That which was originally pure, free, sensitive, malleable and capable of being moulded into any form needed to express what is within itself, loses those characteristics. It divides itself into layers of the sub-conscious and the conscious, with inter-actions between them which ever keep the present in a state of active continuity with the past.

Discrimination is really a kind of successive

illusion in which the self has become wrapped and enveloped. We have to unwrap the package in order to come to the priceless pearl which is the Reality.

Fundamentally, it is desire which attaches the mind to sensation and creates the wished-for form, the illusory, the unreal. We experience a certain pleasure, and become attached to it. The sensation of that pleasure sticks to the mind and directs its workings. Through memory the desire for that sensation maintains itself. When by desire the mind is attached to one thing, by association the attachment extends to others ; thus a web of attachments is formed, in which the mind is securely caught. With truth we might describe desire as the wax which sticks in the honey of every pleasure. Each sensation, whether of pain or pleasure, has the tendency to condition the mind through attachment or fear. All enjoyment produces this wax which sticks to the mind, unless it is enjoyment which is of the pure nature of awareness, like light that may fall on anything foul or fair, but itself remains unsoiled. One can experience the acutest of sensations and be aware of every nuance in them, yet remain unaffected by them

if the consciousness is just conscious in the true sense of the word and does not react to the sensation in a manner which brings into its nature forces which remain there and organize it into a form through which it has to act afterwards.

The sense of "I-ness," of self and self-seeking, arises from desire. It has been called "self-personality," a term which distinguishes it from the pure personality which an individual can be, and is one of the first fetters to be put aside—first, in the sense of primary, all others being derived from it. The Lord Buddha spoke of the illusion of the ego (the separative self) as the root-cause of sorrow, and also of the thirst for sentient existence which produces that self-hood. He did not explain away the sorrow so as to reconcile man to it, but as Prince Siddhârtha sought to solve the problem of putting an end to it, and solved it first in Himself. He spoke of Nirvâna—which means literally putting out or extinguishment—as the extinction of that personal self, the flame which depends for its existence on the wick and oil of attachment to personal experiences.

Before we can rise out of the "I-ness" we



the whole range of our thought and feeling, whether subtly or openly. This is really the effect of the process of human involution. There is the involution of life in conditions of matter, from which arises evolution ; there is a similar involution of Manas in its own cycle in all things of the senses, and in this process of involution there is a continuous modification of the "I" principle, in all the modifications of which "I want" is the central formula. It is the desire-mind, as illusory as it is variable, which trumps up the phantom figure of the "I".

If desire were evil in itself and not meant to play its part in our evolution, we need not have been sent into the world of desire. We have to understand the inwardness of its processes. If it is desire which binds, how may it be killed out or transcended ? Each one has to use his own intelligence deliberately to free himself, his nature and his thought, from the coils in which they are enmeshed.

The process of the freeing of oneself from desire is as much in the scheme of things as the earlier involution in them. Gradual purification, through an inevitable sorting-out of experiences.

intelligent son, the man of thought, the process may be greatly accelerated. It is comparable to the action of an intelligent gardener who has the capacity to outrun the processes of "natural selection". Desire is killed neither by indulgence nor by suppression. Indulgence allays the action of craving, but only for a very short while. Suppression buries desire without killing it. The ghost of it remains, awaiting the cycle of re-emergence and activity; when that moment comes, it reacts with accumulated violence. Just as a sealed retort, with certain cultures, helps to multiply bacteria and develop their strength, so we know that pent-up emotions of sex, jealousy, resentment, and so on, grow in strength and burst out all of a sudden and uncontrollably. The great principle embodied in the Lord Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path was that of rightness in thought, in speech, in action, in means of livelihood, and everything else—rightness in every form, patiently sought and established.

We can best wither up desire by exposing the truth about it to an intelligence willing to see things as they are, without any wish to see

deceitfulness and quick change in every guise, its protean form and action, by searching its action with our intelligence. But we are inclined to postpone such action until the spirit of postponement is broken by bitter experience. We accumulate a lot of purely repetitive experience before we begin to evaluate our experiences ; we reject the poisonous fruit only after having eaten of it many, many times—and suffered. This does not mean that we should eschew what is pleasurable. For all experiences are pleasurable or painful in some degree and we cannot avoid experiences. But every sensation of pleasure can be experienced as it comes, without addiction. And if there is no seeking of gratification in thought or action—this is the true asceticism—all attachment ceases. One accepts whatever comes, content to let it be there while it is there. Such acceptance, which is true detachment, is freedom from the contradictions of opposites, and has in it a quality of transcendence which goes with true understanding.

Our inner state in any experience of pleasure can be simply a registering of the experience in which there is no attachment to the thing that

causes the pleasure. That is a state of immaculate sensitive passivity in which we experience without desire. In that state is freedom from attachment to possessions and pleasures, and the mind is released from all forms of unreality into which it has entered. When we have enjoyed enough and suffered enough, experienced the pairs of opposites, it must be possible for us to stand apart from that entire process of self-conditioning, and see it all objectively to ourselves.

If we can be absolutely objective with regard to ourselves, we can be aware of the nature, origin and effects of every desire in ourselves. When we think of ourselves in relation to our actions, we tend to create a picture which suits the subtle purpose of the thinking mind, namely, to keep us away from the bare truth of the problem. But the phenomena we wish to understand, the whole process in ourselves is made objective as we stand back and view it as on a clean white screen without putting any construction or gloss upon it. This may be described as studying the lower self in the light of the Higher, provided we understand rightly what

When we are aware of what is taking place, in what state are we aware? Each one must find out this for himself. We are aware with something that transcends the field of thought and desire—of *Kâma-Manas*. The two go together in Hindu philosophy. The *Kâma-Manas* has been called the animal soul, as distinguished from the spiritual soul. The desire-mind is the dissipated, stale and conditioned mind, which is versed in sophistry and holds its brief from desire. It journeys in mazes and is misled by its own shadows, which it chases as a kitten chases its own tail.

When the mind is colored by desire, the self-awareness centred in the mind mistakes the color for itself, and thus is formed the notion of the separative self. When all desires are gone, the mind is purged of its impurities, and instead of being opaque as before, it becomes a pure crystalline lens through which shines the clear light of *Buddhi*. It is then *Buddhi-Manas*.

*Buddhi* has been translated both as "the pure Reason" and as "Intuition," but neither of these English words gives the whole sense of the term. *Buddhi-Manas* is that enlightened mind which

sees the truth in every form of thought and experience.

Manas is a ladder with a series of steps. It is the power that steps down and steps up, contracts and expands. It is the power behind space-time, the power of Brahmâ—the manifested Breath of the universe. The ladder is a ladder of consciousness which changes its level. In the human stage it changes the objects with which it identifies itself. In the process of evolution we can see that it successively shifts its ground. From the physical it moves to the emotional and mental, and from these three, which constitute the field at our present stage, to *Buddhi-Manas*. Rising to this higher level it can look back upon and understand the workings at the lower levels.

When the pure mind, *Buddhi-Manas*, views the workings of the desire-mind and the actions caused in the body, it is the Self at a certain stage of self-realization which views the workings of the not-Self.

Then the identification of the consciousness or the self—for where the consciousness is there is the feeling of a conscious self—with the desire-mind and body comes to an end. The

long partnership between *Manas* and *Kâma*, not a happy or creditable one, is dissolved at last.

Whatever is imagined by the mind or consciousness at a certain level, belongs essentially to that level, though under special conditions a force belonging to a higher plane can operate on the lower and the quality of consciousness of that higher plane can be stepped down and manifested in the lower. To a limited extent there is always an infiltration from above ; ideas belonging to the intuitional level infiltrate into the mind. Man is a channel for such infiltration, but he is a poor channel at present. Therefore, when the mind seeks and finds something which we call the higher, it may or may not be really the higher.

When the not-Self, as the objective mind, tries to know the nature of the Self as the subjective Reality, it makes a construct of that reality according to its own propensities or convenience, its own nature, in fact. But when the subjective Self sees what is objective to it in the consciousness, it sees the objective as it is. To imagine the subject is a process of idealism ; to see the object, as it is, is an act of realism. When you see a thing clearly as

it is, your vision is in perfect focus. A vision that sees things as they are is purer and more truthful than a fancy which is self-centred, self-gratifying, sporting colors to suit its vanity, deceiving others and itself. There is in evolution a continuous transcendence of that which has been ; that which is subjective at one stage becomes objective in the process of manifestation.

To separate ourselves from the mind and see the not-Self in its workings is not easy at our stage. We can to some extent repudiate our desires, but even that is apt to be theoretical. For the mind and desire are involved very much in each other. Since the repudiating mind is itself a container of desire, repudiation by the mind is apt to be a diplomatic act, with mental reservations, conscious or unconscious. When we give up things from the heart, from the inmost self of ourselves, then we are free of them. When all things—to which the senses, the sense-mind and the desire-mind are attached—are renounced, it is the Self that remains and shines through each of its vestures.

The Self is the pure subject, without extension, for when there is an extension, there are parts. In the subject there is no becoming, for



becoming is an extension in time. Extension means subject-object relationship. Therefore, the pure subject is without space and time, it must be equally related to all space and time. Since there is no extension in it, it is a point in which is the essence of Being, a centre of Being where there is power to create perfect accord between that which is manifested and its field of manifestation.

*Sat, Chit, Ānanda* was the ancient Indian triplicity of attributes into which the One Existence was divided. *Sat* means "Is" or Being, and was denoted by the point ; *Chit* conveyed the rays of awareness or knowing, the radii ; *Ānanda* is Bliss, which is self-contained, the continent or circumference.

The search for Reality is not outside but within oneself. But without and within are related terms, and to know either there must be a knowledge of the relation between them. Hence the search cannot be outside one's life. Thought and action are necessary complements of each other. When the action is right, all that is expressed in that action is the truth. But what is right ? That requires a

The path to Reality obviously lies not through the seeking of gratifications of any sort, which is an endless process, nor through the mind which has been moulded by desire ; such mind is repetitive, indirect and adhesive, that is, not free. Whatever the realization which is reached, it must have in it a quality of direct perception, the vitality of a pure enthusiasm, the objectivity of the scientist, the wonder and beauty that is in the mind of the artist, an integrity of understanding, and above all, the altruism of a man of action and a philanthropist. The search for it must be guided by a force which will not predetermine the end. Therefore, there must be an absence of desire and of all wishful thinking and the presence of love. Without love, all seeking is self-seeking. Love excludes the idea of self, and seeks only to give of itself. It is a force which rays out in every direction.

The Christ sounded the note : " Love thy neighbour as thyself." If we can only do this as sweetly as it sounds, we will know the Reality for ourselves. The Lord Buddha spoke of love, such as that of a mother for her first-born child, but gave as His special teaching the extinction of desire, which is the

antithesis of love, being the cause of egoism in every form. It is by giving rather than by taking that we are flooded with the waters of life and the channels of our being are cleaned up and opened.

The path to Reality lies in the transcendence of ourselves. Therefore each has to tread the path in his own way and by himself. When we seek nothing for ourselves, we shall find all.

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